SHRI GURUJI

Pioneer of a new era

C. P. BHISHIKAR

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Pioneer of A New Era

C. P. BHISHIKAR

Translated into English by

SUDHAKAR RAJE

SAHITYA SINDHU PRAKASHANA

BANGALORE

SHRI GURUJI : PIONEER OF A NEW ERA. English. By C. P. BHISHIKAR, Translated from Hindi by SUDHAKAR RAJE. A biography of M. S. Golwalkar (1906-1973), second Sarsanghchalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.
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PREFACE

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to present this English translation of Shri Guruji's biography, which was originally written in Marathi and later rendered into Hindi. A small biography of Pujaniya Shri Guruji had been brought out in 1956 on the occasion of his fifty-first birthday. Shri Guruji strongly felt it improper to publicise any personal particulars about him. Consequently, no full-fledged biography could be written during his lifetime. The seven volume tome titled '*Shri Guruji Samagra Darshan*' was the result of the extensive source material collected after he passed away. However, this work contains very little biographical information about Shri Guruji, and whatever little there is, is scattered over seven volumes. For anyone desirous of knowing about Shri Guruji's life and achievements, it is not easy to go through so many volumes. Shri C. P. Bhishikar had made a name for himself with his biography of Pujaniya Dr. Hedgewar, titled '*Keshav: Sangh Nirmata*'. With Pujaniya Sri Balasaheb Deoras' encouragement he had published a biography of Shri Guruji also in the year 1982. Later, adding fresh material to it, he brought out a full biography in Marathi. Had some friends in Nagpur not rendered it into Hindi it would have been a loss for Hindi readers. Further, some senior R.S.S. workers helped in making the Hindi version more authentic and comprehensive by adding and at a few places rectifying the matter in the original Marathi book. It is this final version in Hindi that has now been rendered into English by Shri Sudhakar Raje, the well known 'Satiricus' whose untiring efforts have made this present publication available to the vast English reading readership in our country and abroad also.

I am sure that all those devoted to the Cause of Hindu Renaissance in general and more so the Sangh Swayamsewaks will be inspired by Pujaniya Shri Guruji's life and role during those critical days - both in the life of the Sangh and the nation. And more, this will also prove as a guiding light to them to find right solutions to the many crucial challenges implied in the process of total transformation that our nation is going through, especially in the background of the conflict-ridden phase of the world situation.

Many thanks to all those who wrote, translated and published this excellent book.

RAJENDRA SINGH
Sarsanghchalak, R.S.S.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

We feel very happy to present this English translation of Shri Guruji's biography in Marathi by the renowned writer Shri C. P. alias Bapurao Bhishikar and later on into Hindi. Shri H. V. Seshadri and other senior workers had expressed the need for such a translation for the benefit of English readers. We, therefore, feel privileged to present this biography of Shri Guruji, the second Sarsanghchalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, rendered into English by Shri Sudhakar Raje.

Shri Guruji's was a many-splendoured personality. He had insight and deep experience in the spiritiual arena. For the Sangh workers, he was the verily embodiment of 'Swayamsevakatva'. He had fully dedicated himself at the altar of Hindu Rashtra. Every moment of his life was spent in the cause of the Sangh and so was every ounce of his energy. He was quite conversant in many disciplines of art and science. Many inspiring incidents in his life as well as the enlightening guidance he gave to the workers and the people from time to time are all highlighted in this book.

Shri Guruji's life was a succession of achievements in various fields of the nation's life, such as the Government's unconditional withdrawal of the ban on the Sangh in 1948-49, in intiating work in the fields of students, workers, vanvasis and neglected sections of the society, as also politics and economics. In all these spheres, he left an indelible impact of the Sangh's basic thinking and style of working. It was during his life time that many major events took place like the mass awakening historic signature campaign accompanied by the agitation for a ban on cow slaughter, the construction of Smriti Mandir, a memorial to the founder of the Sangh, in Nagpur, the establishment of Vishwa Hindu Parishad for giving Hindus at home and abroad a basis of social and cultural status, and motivating a majority of Dharmacharyas in the country to step out of their maths and temples and mix with the people for the right type of Dharma enlightment. He warned the Govt. of Bharat about the Chinese aggression years before it took place and warned it to be vigilant. He extended whole hearted cooperation to the Government during the wars of 1962, 1965 and 1971; he alerted the Governement about the anti-national activities of Pakistani and Bangladeshi infiltrators, and in the wake of the Chinese aggression he strove to strengthen the traditional, cultural and religious bonds between Bharat and Nepal.

Along with such inspiring incidents, the book also describes the valuable guidance Shri Guruji gave to Sangh workers from time to time on various national problems. While he issued timely guidance during the Quit India movement of 1942 and the disastrous partition of the motherland in 1947, he also provided wise and farseeing leadership for successfully foiling the

machinations of the Congress rulers, Communists and their fellow-travellers to strike a fatal blow to the cause of the Sangh in the wake of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Similarly he gave an overall comprehensive vision of the Sangh mission commensurate with the changed national situation to all the prominent workers in the country at Nagpur and Jaunpur in 1949, at Sindi (Vidarbha) in 1954, at Indore in 1960 and at Thane (Maharashtra) in 1972.

We are confident that this book will provide the reader a golden opportunity to bathe to his heart's content in the holy Triveni Sangam - the triple blend of inspiring incidents from Shri Guruji's life, the timely and enlightening guidance on several occasion to different fields such as of workers and others and his incomparable ability to motivate people for Sangh work through direct contacts.

Information on Shri Guruji's high spiritual attainment was given by his elder Guru Bhai, spiritual brother, (late) Shri Amitabh Maharaj and jotted down by the late Shri Bapurao Chauthaiwale. Our grateful thanks are due to Sarva Shri Bapurao Warhadpande, Ram Bondale, Kaushalendera and other workers in Nagpur for having painstakingly collected other boigraphical material on Shri Guruji and making it available to Shri Bhishikar. The Original Marathi text was translated into facile Hindi by Shri Balasaheb Sakhdev, Shri Padmakar Bhate and Shri Madhukar Huddar of Nagpur.

A veteran journalist, Shri Bhate had been the editor of the dialy Yugdharma of Nagpur and has done copious writing on current national and international topics. Currently, he is Chief of Vishwa Samvad Kendra, Nagpur. Shri P. M. alias Balasaheb Sakhdev was for many years Sangh pracharak in W. Bengal. For some time later on he was associated with the editing of the *Rashtra Shakti* and ***Yugdharma.*** He retired as Professor of Hindi at Dharmpeth College, Nagpur. He also contributed to the editing of the ***Shri Guruji Samagra Darshan*** volumes. Shri Madhukar Jaidev Huddar worked as a teacher at the Dharmpeth Higher Secondary School, Nagpur after graduating in Marathi and English. He has a book titled *Sangh ka Punjab Parva* to his credit. Currently, he works at Vishwa Samvad Kendra, Nagpur.

Our grateful thanks to these three friends and particularly to Shri Sudhakar Raje, a wellknown writer in English.

Here we will be failing in our duty if we do not recall though most painfully - the labour of love that Shri Satyadev Narain Srivastava had put in for the English translation and had completed half the work when misfortune struck and he left this world all of a sudden leaving us all stunned. Our tearful homage to the holy departed who was intensely devoted to the cause of Hindu Resurgence.

— PUBLISHERS

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Parama Poojaneeya Shri Guruji

1 BACKGROUND

The late Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, the founder and first Sarsanghachalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, had laboured incessantly for fifteen long years and given the Sangh an all-Bharat character. In his final address at the Nagpur OTC (Officers' Training Camp) in 1940, he had remarked "I see here before me the Hindu Rashtra in a miniature form". Soon after, on June 21, 1940, he left this world after entrusting the responsibility of the Sangh to Shri Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, alias, Shri Guruji.

After Doctorji, Shri Guruji became the Sangh's second Sarsanghachalak and discharged this onerous responsibility till June 5, 1973, that is, for a full 33 years. These 33 years formed a very important period in the life of the Sangh as well as of the nation. It was full of many events - the Quit India movement of 1942, the partition of Bharat in 1947 and the political independence of partitioned Bharat, the terrible bloodshed before and after the Partition, the massive influx of Hindu refugees into Bharat, Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir, Gandhiji's assassination on January 30, 1948, the vitriolic campaign unleashed against the Sangh in its wake, the blitz of violence against it and the ban on it, creation of the Constitution of Bharat and determination of the form and policies of the Government of Bharat, formation of linguistic provinces, China's aggression on Bharat in 1962, Pt. Nehru's demise, the Bharat-Pak war of 1965, the second Bharat-Pak war of 1971 and the birth of Bangladesh, activities aimed at de-Hinduisation of Hindus, intellectual upheaval throughout the nation and so on. It was through this curcial period that Shri Guruji nurtured and developed the Sangh.

Travelling ceaselessly all over the country, he gave a powerful impetus to the organisation everywhere. Moving from place to place and garnering individual after individual he spread the network of Sangh all over the country.

Doctorji had stated the Sangh's ideology in a very brief outline. Shri Guruji elaborated its relevance most effectively. Extensive study, deep thinking, spiritual elevation coupled with the Guru's grace, selfless

devotion to the Motherland, boundless love for the people, unparalleled ability to win over individuals and such other outstanding qualities enabled him not only to strengthen the organisation everywhere but also to provide mature intellectual guidance to the country in every field. His basic and constructive thinking on Bharatiya nationhood, the nation's destiny, and the right direction for its rejuvenation in modern times has now become the country's great intellectual heritage.

Shri Guruji's life was thus unique and comparable to that of a sage. From the spiritual point of view he was a great Yogi, but as a devotee of God as manifest in the Society this great man lived in the midst of common people and cared for them like a mother. On the one hand, he loved solitude and had a detached mind, while on the other he was tremendously active in the life of the nation. All-in-all, his was a many splendoured personality.

Shri Guruji had a clear vision of the ideal conditions in every sphere of national life. Guided by the firm faith that it was impossible for Bharat to become strong and confident enough to fulfil its destiny unless every aspect of the nation's life was informed with the pure and inspiring ideology of the Sangh, he pioneered the formation of many fields of such activity. It was Shri Guruji's tremendous drive and initiative that lay behind various nation-wide organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Akhila Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram and the Shishu Mandir educational institutions. Even in the political field, he presented Dr. Mukherji with a priceless jewel like Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya.

In the event of temporary calamities, he guided various committees from time to time and motivated them to engage in relief work. He never allowed personal desires even so much as touch him. Consequently, Shri Guruji's intellectual guidance has left a comprehensive and indelible stamp on the nation's life. Thousands of people who received from him the blessings of the ideology of nationalism and a befitting view of life are even now active all over the country.

Those who were formerly under the spell of anti-national and fallacious thinking are now discarding their illusion and coming over to the Sangh's way of thinking. Even the charges levelled against the Sangh at the highest level in the Government have been proved false and

baseless. Along with this, the motivated propaganda indulged in by selfish politicians in order to discredit the Sangh is fast losing force. Rather, those indulging in this anti-propaganda themselves have lost credibility in the people's mind.

Without caring in the least about the opposition, Shri Guruji kept on fearlessly expounding the thought of our ancient cultural nationalism. His outstanding achievement was that he not only expounded the pure concept of nationalism but inspired thousands to live by it. Anti-propaganda often made Shri Guruji a subject of controversy. Many of his statements were distorted by opponents for the sake of deriving political mileage. But Shri Guruji never got agitated, nor did he lose his equipoise. His mind could never be sullied by hatred. He never swerved from the goal of rejuvenation, in consonance with the Hindu view of life, of the Hindu Nation. He was extremely affectionate in his behaviour, but equally uncompromising in respect of principles. He never accepted any compromise that led to self-denial, self-deception or blemish on the nation's prestige.

No wonder, people want to know more about such an outstanding personality. It is nearly 25 years since Shri Guruji died of cancer, but Sangh Swayamsevaks still cherish many of his inspiring memories. In fact, the circumstances prevailing in the country today vividly bring back memories of the penetrating thoughts he had expressed, just like a prophet, from time to time. It is obvious that a nation's prestige stands on the quality of its people. Nor does a mere change of government create this quality. Shri Guruji stressed the premise that there was no alternative to a system that ensured constant character-building. We experienced the truth of this view in the period of Emergency.

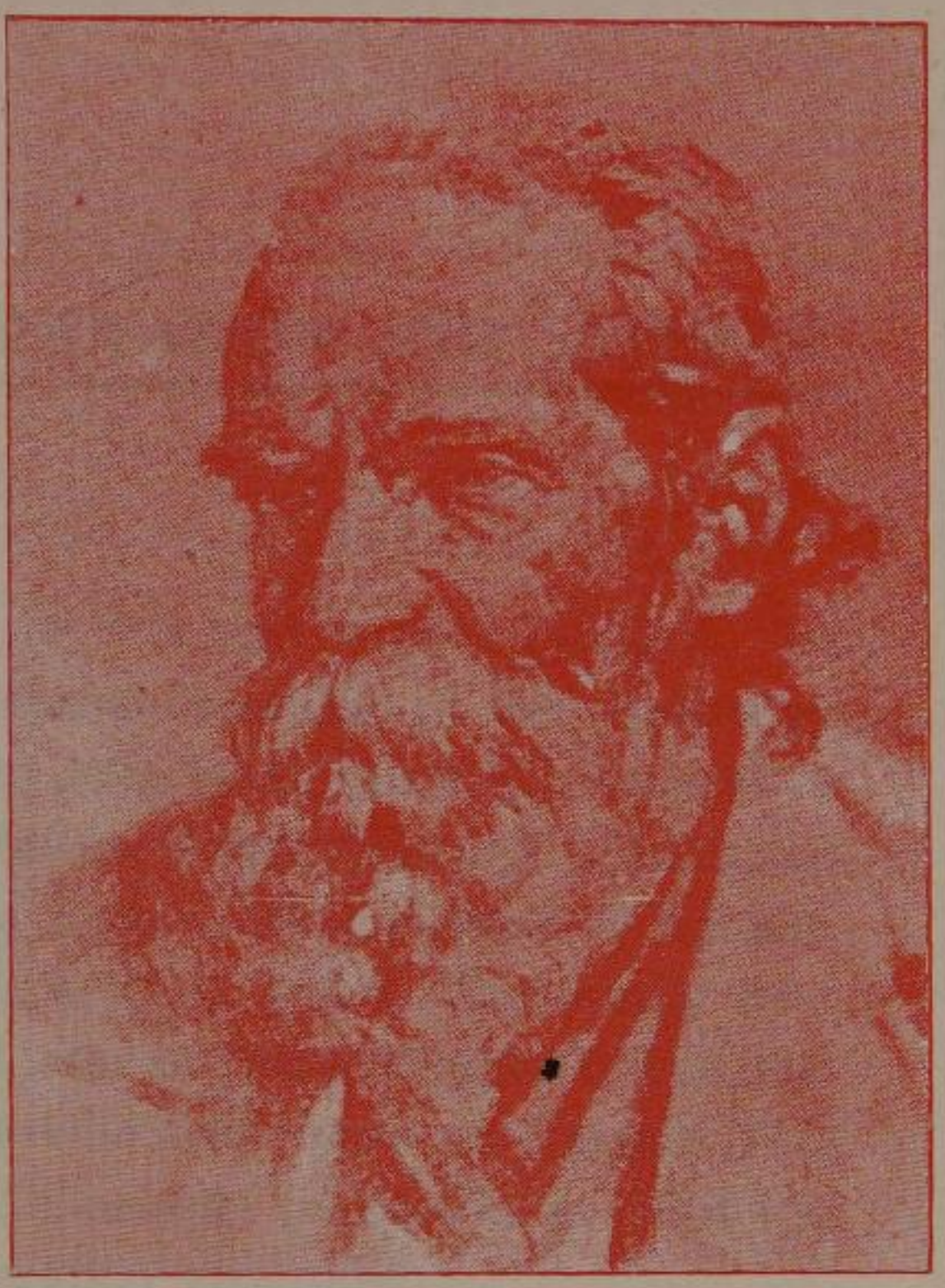
The individual is the focal point of all types of actions, all kinds of transformation. If the individual is not good enough, he can set at naught even a good plan, a good system. The controversy that has arisen over the Constitution of Bharat today also justifies the all-out stress Shri Guruji had laid on human quality. As a successor of the two great dedicated predecessors Dr. Hedgewar and Shri Guruji, Sarsanghachalak Shri Balasaheb Deoras also did remarkable work in the direction of making the Sangh co-equal with the whole society by giving new thrusts to its social service projects. The opponents of the Sangh tried to spread confusion by creating the illusion that there was a difference in the

thinking of the three Sarsanghachalaks, but Balasaheb himself clearly dispelled all such disinformation tactics on many an occasion. He used to say, Shri Guruji had been selected by Doctorji himself and he, Balasaheb, had been selected by Shri Guruji, and this fact was enough of an answer to those who spread the myth of differences between them.

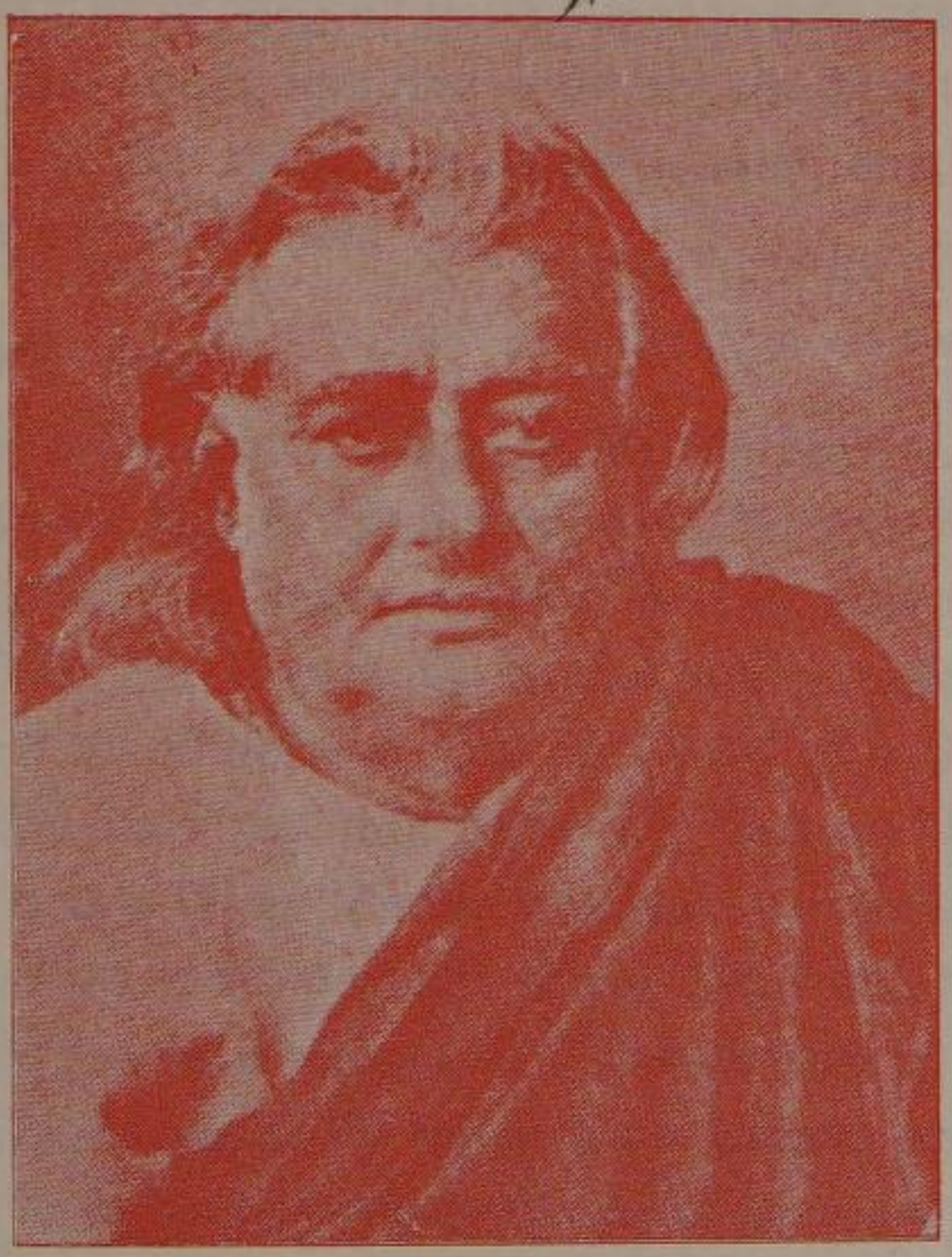
A full biography of Shri Guruji would mean a big tome indeed. Even a collection of his thoughts or even of his selected correspondence would run into hundreds of pages. Actually, Shri Guruji owned nothing of private or personal nature. Like Doctorji, he too did not set up home as a householder. The Sangh, and by implication the nation, was his family. *Samaj-Purush*, the society, as corporate entity, was God for him, and he worshipped this God with selfless devotion all his life. He lived in the light of the *Karma Yoga* of the Gita. The ideology of the Sangh and the very aim of high endeavour for bringing glory to the Motherland always remained the integral parts of his life span of 67 years. A physical body that was not able to perform this service held no attraction for him. Cancer will do its work. I should keep on doing my chosen task, he used to say with smile.

Shri Guruji's was a life of detachment and yet a life of intense action. This book is an attempt at throwing some light on the life of this *Karma Yogi*, dedicated to the nation - a great, ideal example that has become a perennial source of inspiration for the younger generation in every walk of the personal and social life of our country.

Smt. Lakshmi Bai ('Thayiji')
Shri Guruji's Mother



Shri Sadashiva Rao Golwalkar ('Bhauji')
Shri Guruji's Father



Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj
Shri Guruji's Preceptor

2 EDUCATION AND SAMSKAR

Some are born great, being born in rich and famous families. The families of the three previous Sarsanghachalaks of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, however, had no such background of greatness or fame. Shri Guruji was born in a very ordinary family. His original surname was Padhye. The Padhyes belonged to a place called Golwali in Konkan in Maharashtra. Padhye means a practising priest. The family first migrated from Konkan to Paithan and later shifted to Nagpur. It was Shri Guruji's grandfather Balkrishnapant who first came to Nagpur. This migration ended his connection with the priestly profession; so out of the surname Golwalkar Padhye only Golwalkar remained.

Shri Guruji's father Sadashivrao lost his father at a very young age. So he was forced to give up education and take up a job. For long years, he suffered the pangs of poverty. He got a job in the Post and Telegraph Department at Kamti near Nagpur. Shri Guruji's mother, Laxmibai, was from the Raikar family of Nagpur. Sadashivarao was known as Bhauji and Laxmibai as Tai. The couple had four sons, but the first two died as babies of just an year old. The third was named Amrit, but he too fell a prey to typhoid at the age of fifteen.

In The Mother's Lap

Shri Guruji was the fourth offspring. He was born in the Raikar house in Nagpur at half past four in the morning on Phalgun Krishna Ekadashi (Vijaya Ekadashi) Vikram Samwat 1962, that is, February 19, 1906. He was named Madhav, but everybody in the family called him Madhu, a endearing name of his childhood. Out of a total of nine children of Tai-Bhauji only Madhu survived and naturally became the darling of his parents' love and hopes. When Madhu was just two years old, Sadashivrao left his job in the Post and Telegraph department and became a teacher. He got a teacher's job in a village of Chhattisgarh by name Saraipali. Saraipali is at a distance of 90 miles from Raipur and 60 miles from Raigarh. In those days, there were no means of transportation, so one had to either walk or travel on horseback. Madhu had to pass his childhood

in an area that we now call as most backward and cut off from modernity. But when God wishes to fashion an excellent life He gifts that person with some extra benefit that can overcome adversity, provided of course, the individual is worthy of it. Shri Guruji possessed such worth since childhood in ample measures so he quickly assimilated the *samskars* (the good cultural influences) inculcated in him by his parents.

While Bhauji was a sincere and self-respecting teacher of sterling character, Taiji was a very pious housewife and an ideal mother. Madhu's education began when he was just two years old. Whatever Bhauji taught, Madhu learnt it with ease. Taiji had not gone to school but she had a treasure house of stories capable of inculcating healthy *samskars*. Madhu had an excellent memory and took advantage of that whole storehouse of knowledge. In his speech at Pune as Sarsanghachalak, recalling what *samskars* he had imbibed as a child first he said, "When I remember my childhood, my mind is filled with many sweet memories. All those events pass in succession before the mind's eye. I used to be woken up early in the mornings. My mother used to busy herself with household chores, but at the same time chant *stotras* and the names of God. Tai's melodious voice would fill my ears and heart. What a deep and noble impact those melodious tunes sung in the peaceful and elevating moments of the morning must have made on my young mind!"

In-Born Talent

Many incidents of Madhav's childhood days indicate that a razor-sharp-intellect, insatiable hunger for knowledge, extraordinary memory, willingness to alleviate the sufferings of others, extreme forbearance, absence of ego, purity of mind and such other exceptionally high qualities were developing in him right from those days. He was drawn to every good quality and had a deep-felt urge to acquire it. People came to know about these Shri Guruji's invaluable qualities specially when he became the Sarasanghachalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. But his early life-story makes it clear that all these qualities had originated and developed even during his student days. For instance, serious reading, exceptional memory and the capacity to memorise and mastery over Hindi and English were among the qualities acquired during his early years. Right from the primary school stage he did extensive reading. He was a voracious reader and had read Shakespeare in full while still in the middle

school. He also used to narrate to his fellow-students the stories of these plays in a most fascinating manner.

In the class, Madhav used to read some book while the teacher was teaching another one, but he was at the same time mindful of what was being taught. Once when the teacher saw some other book in Madhav's hands, he thought the boy was not paying attention to his studies. So in order to teach him a lesson, the teacher stopped a boy who was reading a lesson and asked Madhav to read from that point onward. Without a moment's hesitation, Madhav took up the text-book and began to read from the point where the first boy had left off. Both the students and the teacher were amazed. The teacher's ploy to teach Madhav a lesson had obviously failed.

Bhauji taught Madhav English right from his primary school stage. The boy made such rapid progress in the language that even when he was in the fourth standard he wrote letters in English to his maternal uncle in Nagpur. Father's job was in the Hindi territory, and because of his frequent transfers to places like Raipur, Durg, Khandwa and so on, Madhav became quite familiar with those territories and at home with Hindi. Marathi, of course, he knew well, as it was his mother-tongue. As a result of living in a variety of places, he came into contact with people speaking a variety of languages. His mind became broadened and the thought took root that all Bharatiya languages were his own.

As the Sarsanghachalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Shri Guruji had to make innumerable speeches all over the country. His oratory was powerful and inspiring. This quality too had developed in his school days. Even as a child, he had won prizes in elocution competitions. He lived a full life as a student - played a lot, studied a lot, helped his friends as much as he could, was modest and carried out happily all the household chores expected of him, and shared the joys and sorrows of others. The foundation of the future life of unique achievements was in fact laid in this period.

Later on, Shri Guruji's father had once said, "That Madhav could prove highly capable in later years, was clear from the qualities he displayed in his school days, but we had no idea that he would become so great. Now I do not grieve that among my children only Madhav survived, because in the form of Sangh Swayamsevaks we have thousands

of children." On such occasions, Bhauji's eyes would shine with pride over his unique son. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the qualities of selflessness, dedication to duty, piety, hard work and pursuit of knowledge which were manifest in Shri Guruji's life became possible only because of the noble *samskars* that his parents had inculcated in him. Shri Guruji too had, on many an occasion, gratefully referred to their noble ideals.

There is an incident showing Bhauji's spirit of dedication and determination in pursuing a worthy goal. He was only a matriculate when he became a teacher. Many years had since passed. But he decided to graduate himself. It was twenty years after matriculation that he passed the Intermediate examination, and it took him another seven years to become a graduate! He discharged his responsibility as a teacher with due diligence, but in his spare time he also continued the mission of imparting knowledge. Mother Taiji was also of such a determined nature that in 1934 she performed a *padayatra* of nearly a thousand miles from Prayag to Alandi in the company of a saintly person named Shri Babaji Maharaj, and bathed the *Samadhi* of the saint Dnyaneshwar with the holy Gangajal brought from Triveni Sangam at Prayag in U.P. During this pilgrimage her back was scorched in an accident, but she bore the agony with equanimity and kept on walking.

A Telling Incident

As the father was transferred from place to place, Madhav's schools also kept on changing. Madhavrao passed his matriculation in 1922 from the Jubilee High school at Chanda (now Chandrapur). Bhauji wanted him to go to the medical college and become a doctor. So despite heavy financial burden he got Madhavrao admitted to the science branch of Fergusson College at Pune. Admission to the medical college was possible only after passing Intermediate in science. In the meanwhile, however, the Government of Bombay had announced that admissions to its colleges would be restricted to those domiciled within that province. In those days, however, Madhya Pradesh and Berar did not form part of that State. As a result, Madhavrao had to leave the college after three months and return to Nagpur. Bhauji's dream of making his son a doctor remained unfulfilled.

On returning to Nagpur, Madhavrao got admitted to the science

branch of Hislop College, a missionary institution, and passed Intermediate in 1924 with merit. During the first two years at the college, he became known as an excellent sportsman and also a scholarly student. Here is a memorable event of this period. Prof. Gardiner once made a reference to the Bible in the class. As it was a missionary college, study of the Bible was compulsory. Madhavrao had made a deep study of the Bible also. Even in his speeches as Sarsanghachalak and during conversations, sometimes he used to make references to the Bible as well as to the life of Jesus Christ. When he saw that Prof. Gardiner was wrong in giving that particular reference he stood up and said, "Sir, you are giving the wrong reference." and quoted the right reference from his memory. The professor was amazed, but how could he stand a student being more knowledgeable about the Bible than him? So he called for a copy of the Bible to check up and found that Madhavrao was right. The book contained the reference exactly as Madhavrao had quoted it. The professor accepted his mistake sportingly and patted Madhavrao on the back.

During these two years, Madhavrao frequently absented himself from the class to read some other books. Whether at school or at college, he never read for just passing examinations. Although he would read and read to satisfy his hunger for knowledge, he never neglected his studies. The well-known blind flutist Shri Sawlaram was his bosom friend and he also learnt the art of playing on the flute from him.

After passing the Intermediate Examination, Madhavrao entered a new phase of his life, which was to have an altogether new and far-reaching impact on his future life-pattern. It commenced with his entry into the Banaras Hindu University.

3 STUDYING AND TEACHING AT KASHI

The Banaras Hindu University, founded by Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, was his outstanding achievement and a unique institution that used to attract enterprising youth from all over the country. Founded in 1916, students from almost all the provinces of the country and speaking a variety of languages flocked to it by the thousands. It was a sort of modern *Ashrama* that Pt. Malaviya had set up on the lines of the ancient *Gurukul* system. His basic purpose in setting it up was to re-illumine the Hindu philosophy, learning and arts and to provide a perennial fountainhead of knowledge to the younger generation. Pt. Malaviya had worked hard to make this university purposeful from all points of view.

Madhavrao Golwalkar got himself admitted to it as a student of B.Sc. and loved everything about the place : the library stocked with one lakh books, the scenic surroundings, the well-equipped laboratory, the huge playgrounds and the excellent gymnasium. In 1926, he took his B.Sc. degree and in 1928 passed the M.Sc. examination with a First Class in Zoology. During the four years at the University, he studied hard but he also leaned more towards a spiritual life, for which he had an inborn inclination.Those days no other student must have used the library as much as he did. His reading was diligent and wide-ranging: Samskrit epics, Western philosophy, inspiring thoughts of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda, the main scriptures of various religions and sects and many books on scientific subjects.

Insatiable Thirst for Knowledge

Madhavrao was such a voracious reader that even during a prolonged illness, while in the final year of B.Sc., he always had a book in his hands. His reading continued even when he was running high fever. He was also a very fast reader and could finish a big volume in a single day. He also used to read till late in the night. Many a time he returned from the playground in the evening, took his meal and settled down to his reading-which sometimes continued till the early hours of the morning. Then he rested for a little and was again ready, fresh as ever, for the next day's

activities. Books always lay scattered all over his room. As he had a spiritual bent of mind, even while he was a student at Hislop College in Nagpur he used to go to the headmaster of the City High School, Shri Muley, to study the Hindu scriptures. While in Banaras, spiritual discussions, study of Vedic treatises and contact with Pt. Malaviya too had left a deep impact upon him, which became visible in his life in various ways like worship, meditation, *Asanas, Pranayama*, indifference to mundane individual life, and a sense of identification with the joys and sorrows of the society. It is possibly during this same period that he might have started thinking about his future course of life. As a student at the University, he had to undergo great financial hardships, but his face never betrayed them.

Cultivating Physical Stamina

Those who are acquainted only with Shri Guruji's later life in the Sangh would be surprised to know some things about his earlier days. Everyone knows that he ate but little, but how little no one can imagine. An incident in Calcutta provides a pointer. Once a well-known doctor gave him a complete physical check-up and found that although Shri Guruji's health was generally good he had very low blood pressure. So he asked Shri Guruji about his daily diet. On being told about it, he calculated the number of calories and was stunned. "How is this possible?" How can you survive on so few calories? I can't believe you are a living man" he exclaimed! Shri Guruji and everybody else laughed. Jokingly Shri Guruji said, "But is it not true that I exist?" He ate only as much as was necessary to sustain his bodily existence. His life style was simple as of a common man. But there was another aspect to it. An Ayurvedic expert of Mangalore, and a reputed exponent of yoga, said, "Shri Guruji's physique is in such a yogic state that it needs just a little amount of food."

But Shri Guruji did a lot of physical exercises during his boyhood and youth. He also ate well. His favourite sport in Banaras was to swim across the Ganga. He also went to the gymnasium for workouts like Dand and Baithak. He had achieved great skill on the Mallakhambha also. Once, when he was in the gymnasium, he saw a Bengali youth looking at the Mallakhambha, and asked him, "Do you want to learn Mallakhambha?" Then he taught him its technique and the youngman was surprised that a college teacher should be so adept at this streneous exercise also. As

a result, Shri Guruji had built his body strong and tough. In the later irregular life that he had to lead for the sake of the Sangh the bodily stamina of these earlier years and the yoga discipline of later times stood him in good stead.

There was a time when Shri Guruji's diet used to be quite substantial. No one would believe that he would even bet on how much he could eat. He could even consume two full meals one soon after the other. So it happened at a place called Katol near Nagpur. He went to a friend's place after having his meal. The friend was about to eat, so he and his wife pressed Shri Guruji to join him. Shri Guruji sat down for a second meal and finished all that had been cooked. Only when the friend's wife prepared to knead more dough for rotis did he decline and get up! Of course, such an incident was an exception.

In his student days, Shri Guruji had a keen hunger for knowledge. And he strongly disproved of students or teachers using guides. Once a teacher using a guide gave a wrong meaning. Shri Guruji stood up and pointed out that the meaning was wrong. The teacher tried to justify himself on the basis of the guide. But Shri Guruji forcefully said, "Then the guide too is wrong". Then he added, "I am not interested in learning from a teacher who teaches from a guide". The matter was taken to the Principal. He too saw that the teacher's meaning was wrong. He took away the subject from the teacher but also told to Shri Guruji, "You should not insult the teacher like this in the class."

Life's Direction

After passing his M.Sc., Shri Guruji chose marine life for his thesis and went to study at the acquarium in Madras. But he could not complete his research due to father Bhauji's retirement and his consequent inability to finance his son's stay at Madras. So within a year Madhavrao had to leave his research half-way and return to Nagpur. Studies apart, the thoughts raging in Madhavrao's mind in those days find a reflection in the letters he wrote from Madras. They reveal the *samskars* imbibed in Kashi, the natural impact of the happenings in the country on a highly sensitive, youngmind, and the mental struggle in deciding his future goal in life. This was indeed very crucial period in Madhavrao's life. The storm raging in his mind gives a clue to the direction his future life took. The

important point to be borne mind is that although this young man was engaged in scientific research and was standing on the threshold of a conventional family life after completing his education, thoughts like personal ambitions of a happy personal life never so much as crossed his mind.

Generally speaking, this is the time when a youngman dreams of a job, earning money and settling down to a householder's life. But the long letters Madhavrao wrote to his friends during this period - letters that sometimes went on for 14-15 sheets - had no reference at all to any such aspirations concerning his personal life. They mainly dwelt upon philosophical ideas and analysis of thoughts on what constituted the right direction for a fruitful life. For an understanding of the struggle going on in Madhavrao's mind and of the direction of his thoughts it would be useful to quote some extracts from these letters.

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeo and Rajguru had assassinated Saunders for his atrocities. Expressing his strong reactions to this event, Madhavrao wrote to his friend Baburao Telang in the first week of January 1929:

"Heard about the explosion at Lahore. Felt highly gratified. It is a matter of satisfaction that, although to a small extent, the insult meted out to the nation by the power-crazy foreign rulers was avenged.

I have often discussed with you ideas such as of universal brotherhood, equality, peace and so on. I have denounced violence, hatred, the attitude of revenge etc., and held you guilty, quarrelled with you. You will be surprised that it is the same me who is writing like this. On one side there is the desire to take revenge and the impulse of youth, and on the other the serene but immutable Vedic thought. There was such a fierce struggle between the two in my mind in those days that I became restless. The mind was in a turmoil. Many days passed in this state. A couple of times I got fever, there was a strong cough, the eyes felt strained and I felt drained out. People noticed my physical condition and the supervisor of the acquarium forced me to see a doctor. The doctor warned me that if I did not take care the ailment could aggravate. I did not panic, but immediately started on injections and other medication."

The illness continued for two months. By the time Madhavrao got well and his mind too calmed down. Now he knew what he had to achieve in his life. In the same letter he writes:- "There has to be a new national

awakening among the people. The real relationship between Hindus and Muslims will have to be made known to all. The Brahmin-non-Brahmin controversy will have to be ended. I am not a big leader nor a worker of any group. But every one must contribute his might to this task."

Madhavrao Golwalkar had thus, independently, decided about his direction even before he came into contact with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. It is really God's grace that such a clear realisation of his duty had dawned on a youngman who was selfless, scholarly, pure of mind, spiritually inclined, possessed of a comparative knowledge of modern and ancient learning absorbed from hundreds of books, and had just crossed the threshold of the university. No wonder, nearly eleven years later this youngman accepted the responsibility of the mission of national awakening launched by Dr. Hedgewar and guided it with exceptional ability for 33 long years.

Call of the Himalayas

It seems that even 5-6 years after leaving the University the tempest in Madhavrao's mind had not finally calmed down. The serene and steadfast Himalayas beckoned to him again and again for a life of solitude and meditation for achieving Moksha — Liberation. Although he never dreamed of marrying and settling down to an ordinary householder's life, he was not sure whether to live in solitude and meditate on Moksha or to live amidst the common people and try to solve their problems. It was with a scientist's dispassionate intellect that Madhavrao could look at this tussle between the two apparently contradictory attitudes within himself and analyse it.

Madhavrao's powers of right discrimination were fully awake, Being fully alive to the situation in a letter to his friend Telang written on March 20, 1929 he writes - "I have no desire to attune myself to a mundane human life. What I want is to stretch this string of life to create a still purer tune. While doing so, mental strain cannot be avoided. This means, it does not matter if one has to live apart from the common world. The important thing is that the string of life must not be out of tune with that heavenly music."

He knew that this way to happiness was strewn with thorns, but that never deterred him. It was not in him to lose heart fearing failure. In this

same letter he furthers writes, "There is no other way but to embrace this uncertain and dangerous course. It is only a Shuka, triumphing over Rambha's lures can attain *Brahmapad*, (the ultimate abode of the Supreme) while a Vishwamitra, treading the same path, succumbs to Menaka and bites the dust. My path also is something similar. But to make this an excuse for giving it up and say I would stick to the muddy trail of the common man would be sheer timidity. In the quest of the final bliss one must also be ready to face the agony that inevitably falls to one's share and to face it with determination and conquer it. There is no other less dangerous course."

In his effort to turn his mind away from mundane matters, Madhavrao often thought of breaking all its bonds and straight away go to the Himalayas. But soon enough his mind, which would grieve over the sorrows of others, would condemn this thought and confront him with the query, "How can you leave everybody to his fate and go away seeking your own happiness?" However, after a time this struggle too subsided.

In a letter to Shri Telang written on February 28, 1929 he says : "I have already accepted initiation into Sanyasa, but it is not yet complete. Perhaps my original idea of going to the Himalayas was faulty. Now I am trying to cultivate a sense of renunciation in every atom of my being even while living in the ordinary world, sharing in the sorrows of a common man's life and discharging all its responsibilities with diligence. Now I shall not go to the Himalayas, rather Himalayas shall come to me, its serene silence will dwell within me. Now it is not necessary to go anywhere for attaining that serenity."

It was in accordance with this decisive turn in his thinking about the purpose of his life that Madhavrao became one with the mission of the Sangh. Not that there were no internal conflicts even later. But he never strayed from the course he had consciously chosen. Though he had to leave his research at Madras incomplete he did get an opportunity to work as a lecturer in Zoology at the same Banaras Hindu University his *alma mater* in 1930. The ensuing period of three years he spent there proved extremely important in deciding the future course of his life.

Although young Madhavrao was a lecturer in Zoology he was also willing and able to teach his students and friends subjects like English, Economics, Mathematics and Philosophy. For teaching these subjects at higher levels he had to study them himself, but he never bothered about

it nor did he shirk it. If those books were not available in the library he would even buy them. In addition to this, a major portion of his salary would be spent in paying the fees of his promising poor students - or even buying books for their sake. No wonder that because of this social and helpful attitude he was very popular with his friends and students and was also highly respected by them. This love and respect led to everyone calling him Guruji. This name became common practice in his Sangh life and later throughout the country. His beard and flowing locks are a different story and belong to a later period.

Entry into Sangh

Another important development that took place during this period was Shri Guruji's coming into direct contact with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. No wonder the Sangh Swayamsevaks made it a point to establish close relationship with such a gifted teacher. Young men like Shri Bhaiyaji Dani, who had arrived in Kashi in 1928 for further studies had opened a Sangh Shakha there. Bhaiyaji Dani also tried to benefit as much as possible from Shri Madhavarao Golwalkar's qualities as a teacher. This led to Madhavrao occasionally visiting the Shakha. The boys not only took Madhavarao's help in studies but also arranged for his speeches at the Shakha. The Swayamsevaks also used to behave with Madhavrao as if he was the patron and chief of the University Shakha. As result, Shri Guruji became quite intimate with Bhaiyaji Dani and other Swayasevaks. The credit of Dani being able to complete his education at the University also goes largely to Shri Guruji. Bhaiyaji Dani too, on his part, made a major contribution in popularising Madhavrao's name as Guruji in the Sangh.

When Shri Guruji became Sarsanghachalak, Bhaiyaji Dani was Sarkaryawaha, General Secretary, for some years. While in Kashi Shri Guruji could get only superficial knowledge of the Sangh. But the idealism and dedication of the Sangh Swayamsevaks had captivated him. He was also highly impressed by their self-inspired spirit of discipline. Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya had a special love for Shri Guruji. Shri Guruji too often took the Swayamsevaks to meet Malaviya for his blessings. As Malaviya had a good opinion about the work of the Sangh he later gave it an open space as well as a small building for its office within the University campus.

In 1932, while Shri Guruji was teaching at the University, he and

another lecturer friend, also a lover Sangh, Shri Sadgopal, were invited by Dr. Hedgewar to Nagpur for the Vijaya Dashami function of the Sangh. The guests were welcomed with garlands and were taken round the Sangh Shakhas in Nagpur. In their personal contact during this stay, Doctorji gave Shri Guruji a clear idea of Sangh work. As a result, Shri Guruji on returning to Banaras, began to take more interest in the University branch.

While teaching at the Banaras Hindu University Shri Guruji because of his closeness to Sangh work, immensely liked the idea of organising Hindus. Sangh workers too had begun to feel that if such a gifted person joined the Sangh the organisation would acquire a worker of pre-eminent merit and capacity. Shri Guruji was already known as a scholar of great erudition, and his daily life also showed all those qualities required for building up the organisation—high character, selflessness, charisma, forbearance, purity of mind, ability to identify with the joys and sorrows of others, unflinching dedication to principles and going to the fundamental aspects of life. Spiritual attitude to work, meditation, indifference to personal comfort and a simple life-style formed the special featurs of his life. Complete concentration on the work on hand was a quality he had cultivated right from his student days. Once when a scorpion stung him while he was a student at the B.H.U. he just made a cut where he was stung to allow the toxic blood to flow out, bathed the spot with potassium permanganate, and went back to his books. When friends asked him how he could keep on reading when a scorpion had stung him, he just replied, "The scorpion has stung me in the foot, not in the head, so what is the problem?"

Sometimes he would decide not to take his meals, and then would go without food for days on end. But that did not make any difference to his routine. He would keep on reading till late at night, but no adverse effect could be seen on his health later on. Later, when he became the Sarsanghchalak, he would carry out planned programmes with due enthusiasm although he was running high fever. On such occasions he even never let his co-workers know that he was unwell. Obviously he could do so only because of the great pains he had taken previously to develop his inner strength. But all this does not mean that he neglected his physical health. He was always keen on ensuring that his body functioned quite well. He was a classic example of how one could be the master of one's senses instead of their slave. Dr. Hedgewar too had similarly taken

care of his physique for spending every ounce of his physical energy for the cause of the Sangh later in life.

Shri Guruji had a very large circle of friends at the Banaras Hindu University, and he never forgot even a single one of them. Whenever he came across an old friend during his country-wide travels for Sangh work Guruji would chat with him about the old times. The friend would be amazed at Shri Guruji's memory, his courtesy and his affable nature. Shri Guruji's frank insistence on discipline and observance of rules had also increased his colleagues' respect for him. Once, while Guruji was doing research at Madras the Nizam of Hyderabad came to visit the acquarium, but Shri Guruji refused to admit him unless he paid the admission fee. In Banaras too, Shri Guruji had once sided with the guards when an insolent professor tried to enter the venue of a programme by a way that was reserved for ladies. All these qualities were to benefit him in discharging the growing responsibilities in the Sangh. The future course of Sangh work also showed how right Doctorji was in his assessment of a person's capabilities.

Shri Guruji had been appointed as a lecturer only for three years. It was not long before these three important years were over, and in 1933 Shri Guruji left Banaras to return to Nagpur.

4 AT THE SARGACHHI ASHRAM

The period of five years after the return of Prof. Madhavrao Golwalkar alias Shri Guruji from Kashi to Nagpur witnessed an extraordinary tussle between the will powers of two great personalities which swung sometimes towards each other and at other times the other way round. One was Dr. Hedgewar, who had completely identified himself with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the other Shri Guruji, erudite scholar, spiritually inclined, an independent intellectual firm in his views. Two years had passed since the two had come to know each other. Doctorji had assessed Shri Guruji as a man of many exceptional qualities and was naturally keen on ensuring that he identifies himself with the Sangh work. His was many-sided efforts to channelise a wild jungle stream flowing where it willed, discipline it and direct it in the service of the *Rashtra Purusha,* the Nation God. To quote Shri Guruji himself, "It was that great man's acute agony at the nation's pitiable plight and his unreserved dedication to the cause that ultimately made me to surrender to him, and this surrender indeed proved a matter of great happiness and satisfaction for me."

On returning to Nagpur, Shri Guruji lived with his maternal uncle Shri Raikar. In those days Bhauji and Taiji were at Ramtek, 25 miles from Nagpur. Bhauji had bought a house there on his retirement. Shri Guruji visited them often. Finding the family somewhat in financial straits he started working as a teacher in his uncle's coaching classes. At the same time, he also enrolled himself in a law college. At the other end, Doctorji's efforts to bring him nearer to the Sangh continued by gradually entrusting him with higher and higher responsibilities.

In those days, the Sangh's main Shakha was being held in Tulsibagh. In 1934 Shri Guruji was appointed Karyawaha, Secretary, of this Shakha. The same year Doctorji sent him to Mumbai for spreading the Sangh work there. The only training camp of the Sangh to be held as early as 1935 was in Akola, and Shri Guruji was made its *Sarvadhikari*, the overall chief guide, which he discharged with great ability. Doctorji was immensely pleased to see that the atmosphere in the camp was brimming with joy

and enthusiasm In Nagpur, Shri Guruji often called on Doctorji and took part in his meetings. In 1935, he passed the law examination with merit, and for some days after that a name plate with the words 'M.S. Golwalkar, pleader' was put up at his residence.

During these two years, Shri Guruji's aged parents often tried to coax him, their darling son, into matrimony but every time they raised the topic Guruji laughed it away. One day, however, he plainly told his father, "I have no desire to get married. I don't think I would be happy as a householder. But if you insist, I am ready." Bhauji, having sensed his son's strong feelings in the matter, never again urged him to marry. But the mother was, after all, a mother; the family could continue only if Madhu married, and she did not want it to come to an end with themselves. Naturally, she kept on urging him to marry. Once when she pressed Shri Guruji too much he firmly told her, "Tai please do not talk about the family coming to an end. Even if many families like ours come to an end for the good of the society it would be very much necessary in its present day condition. I am not in the least worried about the end of our family." After that, for all her love for her son, Tai never broached the topic of marriage again.

In Search of the Guru

At this juncture, Shri Guruji's life suddenly took a new turn - a turn that caused anxiety in everybody's mind. He was getting closer and closer to Doctorji and his participation in Sangh work was also growing, and yet his identification with it was not yet complete. He leaned more towards the Ramakrishna Ashram located in the Dhamtoli area of the city, and had developed intimate relationship with the head of the Ashram, Swami Bhaskareshwarananda. After the day's chores were over, Shri Guruji used to spend most of his time at the Ashram. Here, with every passing day, he became increasingly interested in spiritual activities like meditation discussing on spiritual topics etc. and slowly began intense yearning for Self-Realisation. Doctorji was greatly worried over this development obviously because while on the one hand the nation was faced with the challenge of achieving freedom and deliver it from the degradation of slavery, on the other a gifted youngman like Shri Guruji was merely striving for liberation for himself. Doctorji had himself dedicated his whole life at the altar of the motherland and he was looking for talented young

men of action who would think and act like wise. By his own life example he had presented the youngmen who came into his contact with such a living, glowing example also. But as yet he had not been able to persuade Shri Guruji to accept this viewpoint.

One can only say that the fruition of Destiny lies in this very kind of upheaval in the life of some truly great men. Our ancient sages, modern seers like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the saints of Maharashtra or realised souls like Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi have all talked about that state of absolute bliss. On the basis of their own experience they had stated that in this state all restlessness of the mind comes to an end, there is no struggle within it, there is no more any doubt about what constitutes ones Karma, and what does not, and the individual attains perennial bliss which is not dependent upon any outward circumstance and as such free of all mental stresses and tensions. Destiny may have willed that only after realising this state of mind should Shri Guruji's yogic personality be completely dedicated to the mission of the Sangh.

After a time, Guruji's desire for self-realisation through single-minded *Sadhana* at the feet of a realised Guru became so intense that one day, without telling any one—either his parents, relatives, Doctorji, Sangh workers or his lawyer-friends he set out in search of the Guru. This was in the summer of 1936.

The saintly person whom Shri Guruji approached was Swami Akhandananda, one of the few youngmen Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had selected for vigorous *sadhana* and realisation of a great life-mission. Swami Vivekananda was his *guru-bandhu* co-disciple. These dedicated youngmen had accepted the mission of re-establishing the spiritual ideal of our national life and the worship of *Daridra Narayana* (God in the form of Poor) by way of service to the poor and destitute. This was in fact, the national mission and the divine destiny of Bharat.

It is said that once when Swami Akhandananda was on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas, he was passing through Murshidabad district which was then in the grip of a terrible famine. The people's plight was so pitable that his heart overflowed with compassion and he could no longer proceed any further on his pilgrimage. He camped at a place called Sargachhi and began to work for relieving the people's suffering. This relief work gradually led to the setting up of an Ashram. The scenic surroundings of

the Ashram was true to the name Sargachhi — a wood thick with trees. Gradually, the Ashram expanded into a great centre of service and meditation, a school, a dispensary and so on. *Sadhakas* desirous of initiation at the Ramakrishna Ashram in Nagpur had been called by Swami Akhandananda to come to Sargachhi Ashram. Shri Guruji was one of them.

At the Nagpur Ashram, Swami Amoortananda, popularly known as Amitabh Maharaj, had been greatly impressed with Shri Guruji's personality. To quote his words, "When I saw Shri Guruji I felt as if I was face to face with a spiral of fire, covered with some ash. Once this ash was removed, his personality would certainly shine forth glowing with all round radiance."

He also had encouraged Shri Guruji to go to Sargachhi Ashram. Swami Bhaskareshwarananda, head of the Nagpur Ashram, was also in favour of it. Correspondence was carried out with Swami Akhandananda at Sargachhi Ashram and his consent obtained. All this done, Shri Guruji suddenly left for Sargachhi. None had any inkling of where he could have gone. People in Nagpur wondered and talked about it.

Shri Guruji's sudden disappearance naturally came as a jolt to Doctorji. Shri Guruji's lawyer-friend Shri Dattopant Deshpande was the only person in the know of things and it was through him that Shri Guruji had arranged for the delivery of a detailed letter to his parents. It was this letter that made the whole story clear to one and all. But by that time it was too late. Shri Guruji had by then already reached Sargachhi. Now nobody could do anything but to wait and see what steps he would take next.

Doctorji too would often ask Deshpande "When is your friend returning from Sargacchi?" Shri Guruji's topic would unfailingly crop up in the informal meetings that regularly went on at Doctorji's place when he would dwell on Shri Guruji's erudition and high qualities. Not a word of ridicule or criticism of Shri Guruji ever escaped Doctorji's lips. He firmly believed Shri Guruji would return and join the work of the Sangh.

Initiation

At Sargacchi, Shri Guruji entered the Ashram and entirely forgot the world outside. *Guru-sewa* and intense meditation became his very life

breath. The relationship between the *Guru* and the *Shishya*, the master and the disciple, is a unique feature of spiritual tradition of Bharat. All the saints have uniformly sung the glories of the *Guru*. Shri Guruji too started serving his Guru in the same spirit pouring out with his whole being into it. Whether it was sweeping the floor or washing Swamiji' clothes or cleaning the utensils, no chore was too low for him. Even a trace of ego would have kept a person away from such menial service. Fulfillment of life is possible only through Guru's Grace and he too puts the disciple through every kind of such fire tests. During his stay at the Ashram, Shri Guruji passed every test with ease.

This chapter of his life has however remained as mysterious as it was sudden. Later on also, when he had completely identified himself with the Sangh's mission, he never talked about his *Guru-sewa* or his *sadhana* or about his self-realisation aspects. Consequently, whatever little information about his life at the Ashram is available could be gleaned only from talks of his co-workers from time to time and his *Guru Bandhu*, Swami Amitabh Maharaj.

In 1949, Shri Guruji had visited the Ramakrishna Mission and Vidya Mandir at Mysore. In his welcome address on the occasion, Swami Amitabh Maharaj had said, "Shri Guruji had done vigorous *sadhana* at the Sargachhi Ashram. On the basis of my association with him in those days I can vouchsafe that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has acquired a 'Narendra' — a king of men—as its leader." Amitabh Maharaj set up an Ashram on the banks of the Narmada at Mohipura in Madhya Pradesh and took up the work of serving the *vanavasis* (tribals) of the area. A Sangh Shakha also is functioning there. There was great intimacy between him and Shri Guruji. They frequently corresponded with each other also. Shri Guruji's letters to Swamiji are unique in style and sentiment.

In a letter written on Sept. 30, 1967 he says, "Last night the nectarine memories of life at Sargachhi Ashram flooded the mind. I do not have sufficient words to express what I felt. It was due to you that that great good fortune came to my share. Its remembrance fills my heart with gratitude. But this is not a subject for mere words, so I am unable to write anything more about it." These words give an inkling of the great universe of the inner self which he had experienced at Sargachhi.

On arriving at Sargacchi Shri Guruji immersed himself un- reservedly in the service of the Guru. Most of his time was spent with the Guru,

during which he did chores like washing his clothes, bathing him, serving him tea, looking after his meals, making his bed and so on. Swami Akhandananda was old, and he was immensely pleased with the selfless manner in which Shri Guruji looked after him. Swamiji was often unwell, and on such occasions Shri Guruji would spend the whole night at his bedside. This was the time when Swamiji talked freely with this favourite disciple. While at the Ashram, Shri Guruji grew a beard and the flowing locks became his face. One day, Swamiji lovingly stroked his long hair and said, "It looks good for you. Don't ever cut it."

For the whole of his life, Shri Guruji honoured this wish of his Guru. About six months had passed in his day-and-night service of the Guru at Sargacchi Ashram, but Shri Guruji still awaited that moment of supreme bliss that comes with Guru's Grace. On the other hand, Swamiji's health was deteriorating day by day.

Around this time, Swami Akhandananda wrote to Swami Amitabh in Nagpur and called him to Sargachhi. The days that Shri Guruji passed in Swami Amitabh's company in the service of their Guru formed a memorable period in his life. Amitabh Maharaj could also see Guruji's intense longing for receiving Initiation. Swami Akhandananda too was often heard saying his life was coming to an end. Finally one day Amitabh Maharaj entreated with Swamiji, "Golwalkarji's parents are now quite old. So he should be given *Mantra Deeksha* without delay and be allowed to go to Nagpur and practise there as a lawyer." To this Swamiji gave a very perceptive reply. He said, "He can be given *Deeksha*, but who knows if he will practise law?"

True to the Swamiji's prophetic words, on returning from Sargachhi, Shri Guruji did not practise law. His life had taken a new direction. But it is also true that his experiences at the Sargachhi Ashram had vastly enriched his life. While serving his Guru, Shri Guruji had seen a living example of *dhyan*, *sadhan* and *samadhi* in Swami Akhandananda's life. He also had the opportunity to listen to the various impressions expressed by the guests, Bharateeya as well as foreign, visiting the Ashram. He would listen to the various aspects of the Vedic philosophy expounded by men with authority on the subject. There was also enough time for study, reflection and meditation.

One day Amitabh Maharaj said to his Guru, "Please permit me to

leave now. It is necessary for me to return to Nagpur." Swamiji simply replied, "How can you leave?" Then, after a pause he added, "You have to be here. My end is now a matter of just a few more days."

Amitabh was stunned. Hesitatingly he said, "Madhavrao should be given initiation without delay." Swamiji too responded saying : "All right, I'll ask Thakurji (Ramakrishna Paramahamsa)." (In his letters to Amitabh Maharaj, Shri Guruji also referred to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa as Thakurji.)

Three days after this conversation, Swamiji himself said, "Golwalkar will be given Initiation tomorrow."

The ceremony duly took place in the Vinod Kuti, Swamiji's residential cottage. After the Initiation, Shri Guruji was sent to the temple for *Darshan*. It was morning and Amitabh Maharaj was performing worship at the temple. He was intensely happy to see Shri Guruji coming there. In his words, "That time Shri Guruji appeared as the very picture of oceanic calmness and serenity."

Shri Guruji has described in the following words the tempest of emotions that raged in his mind after his Initiation: "Red letter day for me to be noted down in words of gold. For did not the fortune of countless millions of births smile upon me and confer upon me the bliss of being graced by the Master? Indeed the experiences of that day are very sacred, too sacred for words. I can never forget the touch, the love, the whole bearing of the master as he conferred upon me this favour of the blessed, and all the time I trembled. I feel changed. I was not what I was a minute ago."

Shri Guruji had received Initiation on Jan. 13, 1937 on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankraman. Later, on Jan. 24, the Swamiji said to Shri Guruji, "May you be blessed with all joy and happines. I pray that you may achieve Self-Realisation. Whatever goodness resides in me, I give to you. Whatever is bad in you, give it over to me. Now I myself have no desire for happiness. I only want sorrow. I pray to God that I may never forget you. You have my blessings. Do always remember this evening. Just look at all the sorrow God has suffered for our sake. The moment Shri Krishna was born he had to leave his mother and live in a milkman's house. He grew up there but there was no happiness for him even there. He had always to contend with the calamities brought about by the demons. What is our suffering compared to his? That is why I pray for sorrow for my lot also." Shri Guruji never forgot this advice of not

hankering for personal happiness, never to fear adversity, and always to live his life in God.

Even after the Initiation, Shri Guruji continued with his *Guru-sewa* at the Sargachhi Ashram, as was required by the rules. He was fully immersed in that life and never once thought about his own comforts or of difficulties.

Some Happy Remembrances

By chance, Dr. Sujit Dhar of Calcutta has recounted two incidents in Shri Guruji's life at the Sargachhi Ashram. The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad had organised a programme in Calcutta. Dr. Dhar had gone to see Swami Niramayananda at his Ashram to invite him as the chief guest for the function. During the course of conversation, Swamiji casually mentioned that he had stayed at the Sargachhi Ashram. Upon this Dr. Dhar said, "Our Guruji was also there for some time."

"Who is Guruji?"

"The Sarsanghachalak of our Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh."

"You mean Golwalkar? Where is he these days? I hear he visits Calcutta some-times. Tell him I'd come to see him when he is free."

A few days later Shri Guruji came to Calcutta. Dr. Dhar told him that Swami Niramayananda desired to see him. Shri Guruji felt thrilled to learn about his *Guru-Bandhu* and said, "Tell him not to take the trouble of coming over here. I shall myself go to his *Ashram* to see him." Dr. Dhar accordingly informed Swami Niramayananda. Hastily Shri Guruji got ready. His intense eagerness to meet his *Guru-Bandhu* could be seen in his movements. Dr. Dhar writes: ``We started for the Ashram. As the lane leading to it was narrow we stopped the car by the side of the road and began to walk. Swami Niramayananda stood outside the gate to welcome the visitor. When Shri Guruji saw him he actually began to run. From the other end Swamiji too ran. The two met and embraced each other. We all went inside the Ashram. The two *Guru-Bandhus* were emotionally overcome while talking about their memories of Baba (their Guru, Swami Akhandananda)."

Swami Niramayananda: "Do you remember? (pointing to a spot) Baba was lying there. His head was in my lap. "Where are Baba's things? The watch, the Kamandalu..."

Shri Guruji : "Everything is safe."

Swamiji : "Hope you have not forgotten Baba. Whatever you are today it is only because of Baba."

Shri Guruji : "Yes, certainly whatever I am today it is only because of Baba's grace."

Swamiji : "You have indeed assimilated in yourself whatever Baba had."

In amazement, Dr. Dhar listened to this intimate conversation shedding light on something Shri Guruji had never allowed to come to light.

Then everybody climbed to the upper floor. Swamiji said, "Baba's birth centenary is approaching. On this occasion, it has been decided to bring out a three volume book on his life and work. You must contribute a long article to it. Some funds will also have to be arranged. The Belur Math is not willing to contribute anything." Later on Dr. Dhar came to know that Shri Guruji contributed a long article of 16 typed sheets to the book. He tried to trace it, but Shri Guruji's name was nowhere to be seen. On inquiry, Swamiji said, "He has kept his word. If I say anything more he will break my head."

Another interesting incident was also recounted by Swamiji. Some time had elapsed after Shri Guruji's entry into the Ashram. He had completely dedicated himself in the service of Swami Akhandananda. One day, an inmate of the Ashram received a telegram informing him that his father was seriously ill. He did not have the courage to ask for Baba's permission to go home, but did so on the insistence of his fellow inmates. Baba was displeased and scolded him. So while pressing Baba's feet Guruji said, "Swamiji you should not have scolded him like that the poor fellow is grief-stricken." Baba crossly said, "Who are you to advise me?" But Shri Guruji persisted with all humility. Finally, his selfless service succeeded in winning Baba over, who affectionately inquired after the disciple's father and also arranged for some money for his journey home. But by that time the disciple had decided not to go home.

A remark Swami Akhandananda once passed about Shri Guruji proved prophetic. An inmate of the Ashram once said to Baba, "That new M.Sc. disciple has cleaned all brass utensils so thoroughly that they shine like gold." Baba said, "Yes, but bear in mind, whatever work he takes up will turn into gold."

About Shri Guruji's whole-hearted service of Baba, the Swamiji said, "Baba's legs had to be pressed before he went to bed. Guruji did this regularly and would stop only when Baba went into sound sleep. Baba usually got up at four in the morning. Guruji was generally up and active before that. He would place Baba's wooden slippers near Baba's feet. We used to wonder - does this man ever sleep at all?"

Swami Akhandananda's health continued to worsen. He was a diabetic and also a heart patient. One day he explained the mysteries of *Adhyatma* (Spiritualism) to his two disciples. He talked till late at night. It was half past three. Amitabh Maharaj suggested that he should rest, upon which he said, "The end seems near. Possibly you may not hear my voice again." Amitabh Maharaj said to Baba, "Madhavrao has a great desire to go to the Himalayas." But Baba replied, "It seems he will work with Dr. Hedgewar in a spirit of selfless social service. He may certainly go to Himalayas once for a while, but see that he doesn't take to solitude."

From that day onwards, Swamiji's health fast deteriorated. Occasionally he would become unconscious, and on regaining consciousness he would sit up. It would then be difficult to make him again lie down. Shri Guruji completely forgot himself while serving Swamiji. At times he did not even have time to eat, some times he had no sleep for two-three days on end. Still he was ever alert in Swamiji's service. It was the same intense devotion with which Shri Guruji attended on Doctorji, when he was lying seriously ill in Deolali near Nashik. At that time, Doctorji had been stricken with double pneumonia. In the training camps of the Sangh too he would spend time in nights nursing some sick Swayamsevak. This rare sense of selfless service on his part had increased people's respect for him manifold. His was indeed a living example of dedicated service.

Entering the Field of Action

Despite all this nursing and medical treatment, Swamiji's health showed no signs of improvement. With great difficulty he was shifted to Calcutta, where on Feb. 7, 1937 at seven minutes past three o'clock in the afternoon, he attained *Nirvana*. Swamiji bade all his favourite disciples a final farewell. Shri Guruji had spent about 5-6 months with the Swamiji in his quest for self-realisation and spiritual knowledge. That great soul was now no more, but before departure he had bequeathed to

his disciple the firm foundation for a life of spirituality. Shri Guruji stayed at the Ashram for some more days after Swamiji's passing away. His mental state at that time is beyond description. Now he had to think about his future course of life. There was of course no question of settling down as a householder, but what was to be done with this life? The question raised a tumultous tempest in his mind.

Amitabh Maharaj says that after Shri Baba's departure he took Shri Guruji to Calcutta to meet all his acquaintances since the time of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa including Paramahamsa's disciple Swami Abhedananda and Swami Vivekananda's brother Shri Bhupendra Nath Dutt. Swami Abhedananda was very much delighted to see Shri Guruji and said "You will surely live a life of dedicated sacrifice." A friend of Shri Guruji since his school days, who was also living at the Sargachhi Ashram, declared his resolve to stay at Belur math. Shri Guruji also expressed a similar desire. There upon Amitabh Maharaj took him aside and said, "You are not to live at the Ramakrishna Mission." Guruji was surprised and said, "Is that true? How do you know?" When Amitabh Maharaj told him about his conversation with Swami Akhandananda, Shri Guruji said "I was also directed by Gurudeo to consult you whenever I have a difficulty. So what is your plan for me?" Amitabh Maharaj replied, "I am going to take you back to where I had brought you from."

Amitabh Maharaj returned to Nagpur with Shri Guruji in March 1937. Here the two stayed at the Ramakrishna Ashram for a month, during which period he asked Shri Guruji to translate Swami Vivekananda's Chicago address into Marathi. Then Shri Guruji's maternal uncle Shri Raikar was called and Amitabh Maharaj asked him to take Shri Guruji to Doctorji. It was thus that Doctorji got back Shri Guruji, the future Sarsanghachalak.

5 DECIDING HIS LIFE'S MISSION

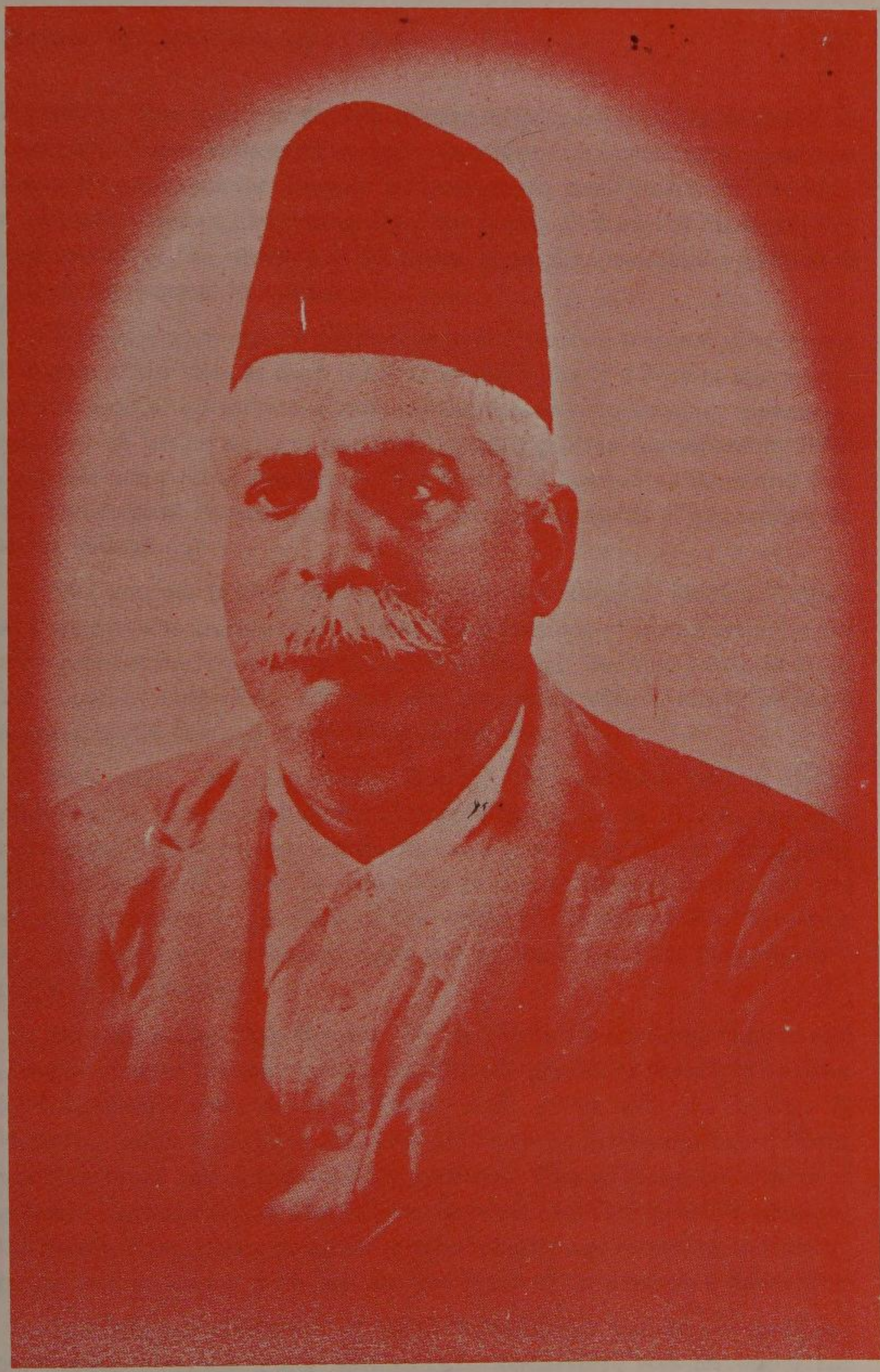
On returning from Sargachhi, Shri Guruji generally remained pensive. Clearly his mind was in a turmoil over the field of action he was to choose. He had already been in contact with Dr. Hedgewar since 1931. He had seen the work of the Sangh at close quarters and also had discussions with Doctorji. Of course he had some understanding about the challenges facing the nation and the society and the effective way to overcome them.

Once Shri Guruji himself revealed "I never knew how Doctorji could enter my sternly rational and inaccessible mind." Along with a rational intellect and depth of mind Shri Guruji also had a heart that would melt on seeing the people's misery. The tradition of Shri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Akhandananda and the Ramakrishna Ashram did not teach a person to pursue just one's own individual liberation. They had all given the call to look upon the poor and the downtrodden as a manifestation of *Daridra Narayana* and to sacrifice one's life in their service.

Naturally the *samskaras* imbibed there had motivated Shri Guruji not to break off from the society, but to live in the midst of the people and to lead a life of action in their service. Shri Guruji was never interested in the politics of power. His natural inclination was towards the basic theme propounded by Swami Vivekananda, the theme of a spiritual foundation for the nation to take it to the pinnacle of glory. He could see that such a mission, which was in consonance with Vivekananda's call for organising the society and for character-building was taking shape in the form of the Sangh. He could also see how Doctorji was pouring out every ounce of his energy in this divine cause.

Founder of the Sangh

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, founded by Dr. Hedgewar and nurtured by him with his life's blood, is indeed a divine mission of national rejuvenation. It was after deep cogitation that he had founded the Sangh in 1925. Before that, he had acquired practical experience by participating in almost every activity aimed at social awakening and national liberation. From his very childhood the flame of patriotism was burning bright in



Parama Poojaneeya Dr. Hedgewar

his heart. The insult of foreign British hegemony over his motherland pierced his heart endlessly. Freedom movement was spreading everywhere. Doctorji's yearning for freedom had expressed itself in his childhood in a fantastic attempt like taking down the Union Jack on the Sitaburdi fort and unfurling the Bhagwa in its place, or in the successful agitation of Vande Matharam' in his school.

When he grew up, he plunged into the various freedom movements going on at the time as duck takes to water. Being of a fiery temperament he was first of all attracted towards the armed revolutionary movement sparked off in the wake of the anti Bengal Partition movement in 1905. Just like many other youngmen. The 'Kesari' of Lokmanya Tilak and 'Kal' of Shivrampant Paranjape served as the igniting spark of inspiration for these youngmen.

The purpose behind Doctorji's joining the National Medical College at Calcutta was mainly prompted by the intentions of participating in the movement of the revolutionaries active in Bengal. Burning patriotism was the constant note of his life and was connected with the revolutionary movement till the end of the First World War.

But, after long experience Doctorji had realised that a secret organisation of a mere handful of people would not be able to demolish the mighty British regime entrenched as it was firmly all over the country. To achieve this it would be necessary to arouse intense patriotism and an ardent desire for freedom in the whole of the society. The fiery way of a revolutionary movement could not by itself build up the organised might of the society.

Doctorji ended this chapter of his revolutionary involvement and plunged into the freedom movement of the Congress. At that time he stood by Lokmanya Tilak in the Congress and sided with the leaders in *Vidarbha* supporting Tilak. Towards this end, he sponsored newspapers, went on tours and delivered fiery speeches. This widened his sphere of patriotic contacts. Doctorji had placed before himself the goal of organising the people. Even after getting his medical degree and returning to Nagpur, he neither practised medicine nor got involved in a house-holder's life.

The Nagpur Congress of 1920, followed by the non-cooperation movement launched under Mahatmaji's leadership, was an important stage in the transformation of Doctorji's life. Extensive preparations had

been made in Vidarbha to ensure that the ensuing Congress Session scheduled to be held in Nagpur would be held under the presidentship of Tilak. But Tilak's sudden demise changed the whole situation. Along with Dr. Moonje Doctorji went to Pondicherry to meet Babu Aurobindo Ghosh and tried to persuade him to preside over the session, but could not succeed. But still, Doctorji participated in the session with his usual enthusiasm and handled the responsibilities of the volunteer corps very efficiently. He even took a leading part in the non-cooperation movement although he was worried about the possible adverse consequences of the Khilafat movement. He made a fiery statement in the Court and was sentenced to one year rigorous imprisonment for 'sedition'. Doctorji's stand was that all differences of opinion should be kept aside while conducting the movement for freedom. On his release from the jail, he realised that the Congress support to the Khilafat movement had only aggravated Muslim communalism. Their attacks on the Hindu society had intensified. The Congress policy of Muslim appeasement had proved suicidal. There was no direct benefit from the non-cooperation movement. On the contrary, because of the eruption of violence there was a sudden announcement of its withdrawal, resulting in a sense of deep frustration among the people.

Evolving a Unique Methodology

During the freedom movement, Doctorji had a variety of experiences. He has experienced an absence of comprehensive and fundamental approach towards nation's ills. From all these observations he arrived at some concrete conclusions, and on their basis decided to adopt a carefully worked-out, novel method to build up a nation-wide organisation. The conclusions he arrived at were clear and based upon the lessons of history and his experience.

His first conclusion was that instead of blaming others, our own weakness as a nation should be held responsible for our slavery and all calamities that had befallen us. Hence this root-cause, this national weakness, had to be removed. Lack of national character in the society must be remedied and a system set up for inculcating enduring patriotism in its place.

Doctorji's second conclusion was that patriotism did not mean merely opposing British rule. It would be necessary to make people realise what really constituted the nation and then awaken in them the urge to identify

their joys and sorrows with those of the nation. If this was not done problems would not end even after the British left and in the absence of character, discipline and patriotism, people would continue with their selfish pursuits and internecine quarrels. So it was absolutely necessary to place positive, constructive idealism before them.

The third important thought that Doctorji fearlessly profounded before the people was that Hindu culture formed the very soul of Bharat and that Bharat was an ancient Hindu Nation - a historically established fact. The nation would have to be made so mighty that the Hindu Society may live without fear and with pride in its a cultural ideals that would render no one dare to cast an evil eye on it. Such an unassailable strength could be achieved only through an organisation of intensely patriotic Hindu people.

He also realised that such an organisation could not be built up by merely making fiery speeches or passing high sounding resolutions in meetings. Hence he adopted the method of the Shakha, where suitable *Samskars* could be imparted day after day. This novel methodology is indeed the most precious gift of Dr. Hedgewar to the nation. Without the Shakha, it became obvious, it was not possible to set up such a big organisation. After deep thought and long reflection Doctorji made the Cause of the Sangh the mission of his life and devoted every moment of his life to its expansion.

Shri Guruji Decides upon His Life Mission

This in brief is the story of the founding and growth of the Sangh under the leadership of Doctorji. For everybody in the Sangh, his personality was the fountainhead of ideological inspiration and a living model of all the necessary organisational qualities.

When Shri Guruji returned to Nagpur from Sargachhi, Doctorji made him realise his life's mission. The two dedicated lives came together and merged into one single mighty stream of life. It amazed everybody to see how such an enduring miracle could take place in just three years. When Shri Guruji returned to Nagpur, the happiest person was of course Doctorji. The inner strength that Shri Guruji had acquired at Sargachhi through *sadhana* and the Guru's grace was no less important for Doctorji. What he only wanted was to see that all his qualities all his spiritual strength and the knowledge had acquired there should be put to full use

in the cause of the Nation in the form of Sangh. He wished Guruji would accept working for the Sangh as his sole mission in life.

A series of meetings and discussions started after Shri Guruji returned to Nagpur. During these talks, Doctorji once again placed before Shri Guruji his point of view that a person equipped with the knowledge and experience of spiritual life should not lose himself in the pursuit of personal happiness but should pledge all his powers to the cause of national regeneration. Doctorji's appeal went home. Doctorji's own life was an open book for Shri Guruji. That life had no place for the narrow 'I' in it. It was the life of a total renunciate and a *Karma Yogi* that had become one with the society as a whole.

Still for some days Shri Guruji remained undecided. Sometimes he would visit the Ramakrishna Ashram, or forget himself in playing on the flute, or enjoy chat sessions with friends, and sometimes retire into solitude for serious reading or meditation. Despite all this, he was coming closer and closer to the Sangh. He had accomplished the astonishing feat of translating Babarao Savarkar's '*Rashtra Mimansa*' in Marathi in a single day and had presented it to Nagpur's reputed lawyer Shri Vishwanath Kelkar of Nagpur. After gradually getting Shri Guruji more and more involved in the Sangh work, Doctorji made him the *Sarvadhikari*, the overall chief, of the Sangh training camp in Nagpur in 1939.

It is not that Shri Guruji threw no light on why he took up the Sangh work as his life-mission. In 1939, he had a detailed discussion with the late Shri G.T. alias Bhausaheb Madkholkar, the well-known Marathi author and editor of the daily 'Tarun Bharat', Nagpur. Dr. Hedgewar also was present at this meeting. Madkholkar asked Sri Guruji a personal question with his permission. After Shri Guruji's passing away, Bhausaheb wrote a long article titled *Trikoni Sangam* in 'Tarun Bharat' (16.6.73) in which there is a reference to this personal question and Shri Guruji's reply. It is important enough to bear reproduction.

Madkholkar wrote :

"I asked Sri Guruji, "I have heard that for some time you had left the Sangh work here and had gone to the Ramakrishna Ashram in Bengal, where you received Initiation from Swami Vivekananda's *Guru Bandhu*, but later you left the Ashram and rejoined the Sangh. How was that? Don't

you think that the Sangh's stand is quite different from that of the Ashram?" On listening to my question, Shri Guruji fell silent and with eyes half closed he thought for a few moments. It was as if he had gone into a trance. After some time, he began to speak slowly.

He said: 'This is a totally unexpected question. But whether there was or was not a difference in the stands of the Ashram and the Sangh, Doctorji would be able to say with greater authority, because during the period of revolutionary movement he was is Calcutta and was closely connected with their activities. You must have read Bhagini Nivedita's book titled 'Aggressive Hinduism'. I am sure you also know how closely she was connected with the revolutionaries. Right from the beginning, my inclination was towards both — spirituality on the one hand and the task of national regeneration on the other. During my stay in Banaras, Nagpur and Calcutta, I realised that if I stayed with the Sangh I would be able to do this work more effectively. So I dedicated myself to that Sangh work. I think what I am doing is in consonance with Swami Vivekananda's philosophy, guidance and method of work. No other great personality's life or teaching has influenced me so much. I believe by doing the Sangh work I shall be carrying out only his work." I shall never forget the light of self-realisation that shone in Shri Guruji's eyes as he explained this to me. Doctorsaheb had also fallen silent lost in thought."

This was a period which proved to be a turning point in Shri Guruji's life, which was so far swinging in different directions. It would not be wrong to say that the Sangh's training camp in 1939 proved to be the decisive event that determined the direction of his life. It was in this camp that the treasure house of Shri Guruji's sterling qualities necessary for Sangh work came to light before the Swayamsevaks. They were all witness to his sense of discipline as the *Sarvadhikari*, his limitless affection for the Swayamsevaks, his boundless capacity for work, his pleasant disposition, his learned oratory, as well as of his deep study and thinking. Doctorji felt very happy that everything that he looked for was happening. The camp made it possible for him to see Shri Guruji becoming what he desired of him for the work of the Sangh. The important point was that from this point onward, Shri Guruji and Doctorji were constantly together. Shri Guruji could observe his leader's life at very close quarters and transform his own life accordingly. Thus Shri Guruji's life kept on

undergoing all types of necessary and beneficial changes. There was no uncertainty any more about what direction his life should take. Doctorji's life had become his model and he had decided to emulate it. Now he firmly believed that the answer to all the temporal and spiritual questions confronting Bharat lay in the Sangh work alone. Once the path was decided upon, Shri Guruji displayed exceptional capacity to proceed on the path-the capacity that had already been in evidence during the various stages of his life-in-his student days, as a lecturer and at the Sargachhi Ashram. The only question that had remained was the choice of life's direction and that too was now solved for ever. As a result, in a very short time, everybody knew the answer to the question - 'Who after Doctorji?'

Doctorji's Comprehensive Assessment

This was first witnessed in an important meeting of workers at Sindi in February 1939, where Doctorji and his other prominent co-workers were present. The purpose of the meeting, which lastlid continously for ten days was to have a free discussion on a variety of subjects like the progress of the Sangh work, the Shakha system of work, the commands used therein, the prayer, and so on, and take decisions on the basis of consensus. These changes were brought about for the purpose of giving an uniform all Bharat form to the daily programmes of the Shakha. The current Samskrit prayer of the Sangh is the one adopted at Sindi. Shri Appaji Joshi, considered Doctorji's right hand man at that time and Shri Balasaheb Deoras were also present at these deliberations. Shri Guruji had been invited as a new colleague. The meeting took up the items one by one, and discussed them frankly and freely. Every participant would contribute to the discussion according to his own light and offer suggestions, and at the end Doctorji would wind up the discussion and announce what was desirable and what was not. This was the way the meeting proceeded, in which the debate would go on for eight hours at a stretch every day. In this meeting, Shri Guruji would also state his views without any mental reservations. On many points his thinking used to be quite sharp and aggressive. But once Doctorji gave his decision, Shri Guruji and all other workers accepted it with full faith.

Once, while talking about this meeting, Shri Appaji Joshi recalled a particular incident: "After bowing to the Flag on the *Sanghastan* to whom

should the Swayamsevak bow next? I and Shri Guruji differed on setting up a definite system for this. While Shri Guruji forcefully argued in favour of constitutional norms, I emphasised upon a system that was in accord with the family spirit of the Sangh. Finally, Doctorji decided in my favour. At that time, I was closely watching Shri Guruji but there was not a trace of resentment on his face. There was also no bitterness in his words at any time thereafter. We were all impressed with his mental balance and faith in the leader. In this meeting at Sindi Doctorji once asked me, "What do you think of Shri Guruji as the future Sarsanghachalak?" On the basis of my observation during the discussions in the meeting I unhesitatingly replied, "Excellent! a most proper choice." Doctorji's selection of the future Sarsanghachalak, though not yet made public, can be called an important link in the series of far-reaching decisions taken at Sindi. We can even call it a gift of the Sindi session.

It was natural for Doctorji to start thinking about the future Sarsanghachalak. Unceasing hard work since the establishment of the Sangh had taken its toll. Since 1932, his health had started deteriorating. It was only his formidable will power that had kept him going on. He toiled day and night, but in his meetings he never betrayed any signs of his physical suffering. He always moved about with a pleasant expression on his face. But being aware of his own ailing condition, he could no longer ignore the matter of making arrangements for the future spread of the work. An organisation set up with such hard work needed a tradition of dedicated and able leadership if it was to grow and progress towards its goal. Persons may set up something but if idealistic persons are not available for taking it forward that work remains incomplete and dies out. Doctorji had often seen this happen. It was natural for him therefore to worry about how the Sangh could be saved from such a predicament.

After the Sindi meeting was over, Doctorji sent Shri Guruji to Calcutta to start the Sangh work in Bangal. Shri Guruji moved all over Calcutta for nearly a month. There was not much money for transportation or other expenses, so he used to walk for 20-25 miles every day. Finally, he succeeded in starting the first Sangh Shakha in Calcutta on the *Varsha Pratipada Day* (The Hindu New Year Day) of 1939. However, he could not stay in Calcutta for long since the summer training camp was approaching. In April, Doctorji called Shri Guruji back to Nagpur and made him its *Sarvadhikari*.

Since 1935, such camps had also begun to be held in Pune, so it was decided that Doctorji would spend the first fortnight at the Pune camp and then be present in Nagpur till the conclusion of the camp there. His health was not good and he badly needed rest. But he had agreed to inaugurate the Marathi film *Bhagwa Zenda* in Pune after the Nagpur camp was over. So it was decided that after the film's inauguration he would rest for a few days in Deolali near Nashik. Shri Guruji was with Doctorji on this trip. The Pune programme went off very well. Before Doctorji was to leave Pune a meeting of workers was called to bid him farewell. In this meeting, Doctorji asked Shri Guruji to speak in Hindi inaugurating a new tradition. Then, as decided earlier Shri Guruji accompanied Doctorji to Deolali.

In-born Tendency to Serve

But in Deolali, Doctorji's condition woresened. His temperature rose sharply. Specialists from Nasik examined him. The treatment did not seem to yield any effect and to some extent they had even lost hopes. But Shri Guruji continued to nurse Doctorji without being shaken. There was nothing that he did not do by way nursing. When the temperature rose very high Doctorji would become delirious and go on mumbling. Normally, a patient in such a state babbles incoherently, but even in that state Doctorji talked only about the Sangh work. Shri Guruji was constantly by his side. He served Doctorji with as much dedication as he had served his Guru Swami Akhandananda, a couple of years before, at Sargachhi. Ultimately by God's grace, his nursing was rewarded and Doctorji's health took a turn for the better. The danger passed and thousands of Swayamsevaks heaved a sigh of intense relief.

There is yet another story of how lovingly Shri Guruji nursed a patient. He was so close to a blind gentleman by name Wamanrao Wadegaonkar, who lived in the Dhantoli area of Nagpur, that he was always ready to take him from place to place on the front bar of his bike. Wadegaonkar had opened a blind school also. Around 1934-35, he had to undergo a major operation, but being blind had to depend upon others. The question was, who would nurse him after such a major surgery? And told Shri Guruji about it. Shri Guruji solved the problem by himself shifting to Wamanrao's residence before the surgery. During the operation in Mumbai also, Guruji stayed with him day and night. Later on

Wamanrao would be overcome with emotion when he recall all this and say, "I shall never forget how gently this great scholar who had done his M.Sc. nursed me with such affectionate concern and attention. I would feel particularly ashamed when he would clean me after my calls of nature. When I showed my reluctance on such occasions, he had a stock reply "There's nothing great about it. Don't I clean myself up after such things? What's the difference between your body and mine?" Tears would well up in Wamanrao's eyes whenever he talked about those times. Actually, Wamanrao had no love at all for the Sangh. But from the day Shri Guruji became the Sarsanghchalak he automatically began to talk of 'our Sangh'. Many ordinary Swayamsevaks and workers too have had similar experiences of Shri Guruji's ingrained attitude to serve whoever was in trouble.

During this illness of Doctorji, Shri Guruji also saw how Doctorji's life had passed the final test of a totally dedicated life. Describing Doctorji's uniqueness Shri Guruji once said, there is no knowing what a patient in a state of delirium would talk about, but even in that condition Doctorji only expressed his worry about the Sangh work. Shri Guruji saw how the Divine Cause of the Sangh had entered into the innermost recesses of Doctorji's heart and was overwhelmed with veneration for Doctorji. As a result the Sangh, Doctorji and Shri Guruji - all the three became rolled into one; and Shri Guruji having dedicated himself completely to the Sangh began accepting greater and greater responsibilities in its work.

On his health improving, Doctorji returned to Nagpur with Guruji on August 7 and began his moves for entrusting him with more and more responsibilities. He began hinting at it in workers' meetings, and at the *Raksha Bandhan* function in 1939 he announced Shri Guruji's appointment as the *Sarkaryavaha*, the General Secretary of Sangh. In view of Doctorji's failing health and the growth of the Sangh, it became clear that Shri Guruji would have to soon bear the full responsibility of Sangh's leadership.

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6 SHOULDERING SARSANGHCHALAK'S RESPONSIBILITY

Shri Guruji was on the *Sarkaryawaha* post for a very short period of time - just for ten months. During this period, the work was fast progressing. In Vidarbha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra a wide network of Shakhas had been set up, and even in distant places like Punjab, Delhi, Karachi, Patna, Calcutta, Lucknow etc., the Sangh work had been started by the Sangh workers who had reached there for some reason or the other. The Sangh was in fact fast assuming an all-Bharat character. The total number of Swayamsevaks had crossed one lakh. It was therefore necessary for Doctorji to be constantly on the move for expanding the work to more and more new places and enthuse the workers there. But he did not let people guess his condition as he went about his work. however he could not hide his sickness from his close associates. He was no more fit to undertake extensive tours. On the one hand was the deteriorating condition of Doctorji's health and on the other was the urgent need to extend and consolidate the Sangh work. Thus Shri Guruji had to shoulder a dual responsibility. Shri Guruji was fully aware of the situation and was facing up to the challenge with every ounce of his energy. His direct contacts with the workers grew fast and close. These increasing contacts made him increasingly aware of Doctorji's power to inspire. As time passed, Doctorji's backache became unbearable.

Selection of the Successor

Finally, some friends urged Doctorji to try the hot springs of Rajgir in Bihar. Doctorji acceded to their request and went to Rajgir. He wanted Shri Guruji also to accompany him, but in view of the growing Sangh work it was necessary for Shri Guruji to stay on in Nagpur. So the Wardha District Sanghachalak and Doctorji's senior associate Appaji Joshi accompanied him. But the treatment at Rajgir also was not of much avail.

By this time, the Second World War had started. The turmoil in the mind of Doctorji and his yearning for the country's freedom, became

uncontrol lable, which would keep awake the night after night. While at Rajgir he wrote a circular letter calling upon all important workers to speed up the Sangh's strength to three per cent of uninformed young Swayamsevaks in the urban areas and one per cent in the rural areas in the following three years. While it is difficult to know his reasoning behind these specific percentages, the situation in the country in 1942 makes one wonder if he very much wanted to use this tremendous youth force for writing the final golden chapter of the independence movement of Bharat. Shri Guruji and the other young associates of Doctorji set to work with all the energy at their command to expand Sangh work as per the time bound programme laid down by Doctorji. But destiny had willed otherwise.

The immediate occasion for the Rajgir letter laying down the target was the camp of senior Swayamsevaks that was to be held at Chandrapur, in Vidarbha. Doctorji used to personally attend such camps and provide timely guidance. This time, however, the tradition could not be followed. So apologising for his inability, he wrote. "I feel sad that I will not be able to be present this time. All of you must be working with enthusiasm to spread the Sangh work fast. But in this camp, I would like you to pledge yourself to increase it to one per cent Swayamsevaks in rural areas and three per cent in the cities within the next three years". Clarifying the type of Swayamsevaks who would form these percentages, Shri Guruji said they should be capable of providing leadership, be equipped with such qualities that he should be able to take 60-70 people with him, be their friend and guide, and able to win their trust and confidence. Thus, a vast organised force working according to the Sangh plan would become a reality. It would keep complete control in its hands and guide the people's powers for achieving freedom.

So, one is tempted to say that had this been possible by 1942, the Sangh would have been in a position to take some decisive steps that year itself. However, it was precisely for want of such strength that Sri Guruji could not strike a decisive blow at the foreign rule even in that crucial period of the Second World War. However, a vast scheme of whole-time workers *pracharaks* for spreading the work came into effect from this time onwards.

Come April 1940, Doctorji began to think about the training camps.

It was decided that just as in previous years he would stay at the Pune camp for fifteen days and Shri Guruji would look after the Nagpur camp. Accordingly, Doctorji went to Pune where all the camp programmes went on as per the schedule. The Swayamsevaks attending the camp bade him a fond farewell and he returned to Nagpur. But the day he reached Nagpur, he developed high fever. Treatment was immediately begun, but there was no sign of it subsiding. Rather, Doctorji's condition fast deteriorated. Shri Guruji was looking after both the camp as well as Doctorji's treatment. As such, he was under tremendous mental pressure.

However, once the camp was over he could concentrate solely on Doctorji's treatment. But this time, God did not will that his service should be rewarded. Doctorji was first taken to the Mayo Hospital and later to the Nagpur Sanghachalak Babasaheb Ghatate's mansion in the Civil Lines area. High fever continued. The backache became intolerable. In desperation, the doctors finally decided upon his lumber puncture. In spite of the high fever, Doctorji was alert as ever. He realised that his end was near at hand. He sent for Shri Guruji and said to him in the presence of all those present: "Now the entire Sangh responsibility is entrusted to you. Accept this first, and then you may do whatever you want to my body."

Shri Guruji was deeply grieved at this talk of succession and said, "Why do you say so? You are going to get well soon."

Doctorji smiled a bit and said, "Maybe, but don't forget what I have said."

At that historic moment, Doctorji had appointed his successor to the position of the next Sarsanghchalak. He had handed over his complete charge to Shri Guruji. Lumber puncture was performed, but the fever rose still higher and the blood pressure also shot up. The pain became so excruciating that Doctorji lost consciousness, and in that state he breathed his last on the next day, Friday June 21, at 27 minutes past 9 o' clock in the morning.

Doctorji's Legacy

This was doubtless a very big blow for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh yet in its infant stage. The Sangh work was just spreading to distant areas outside Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. From the point of view of the growth of the work the atmosphere was quite encouraging.

Looking at the Swayamsevaks with diverse mother tongues drawn from all over country attending the 1940 camp at Nagpur, Doctorji had said in his final highly emotion-charged address on June 9. "Today I see before me the Hindu Rashtra in a miniature form. I stayed at the Pune Camp for fifteen days and there I got personally acquainted with every Swayamsevak. I thought I would be able to do the same here, but as you know I have been laid up in bed for the last some days and have not been of any service to you. So today I have come here to have your *darshan*. I am not in a position to speak much. However, I have only this much to say to you - every one of us, the Swayamsevaks, should make the cause of Sangh the mission of his life, and make the Hindu society so strong that no one would dare to cast an evil glance at it. May every worker return to his place with the *mantra*, 'Sangh is my life's mission' etched on his heart."

It was just ten days after the workers returned home with this unforgettable message ringing in their ears that they received the heart rending news of Doctorji's passing away and that Doctorji had bidden them the final farewell. Lakhs of Swayamsevaks across the country were plunged into grief. It was indeed a bolt from the blue for them.

For fifteen long years Doctorji had sweated and toiled to build up this great organisation. Now it's responsibility had passed on to Shri Guruji's shoulders. Still it was by no means easy to lift the organisation out of the traumatic shock of its founder's sudden demise and take it forward, for the two men had entirely different mental backgrounds.

Doctorji's life had been spent in social and political activity. Even outside the Sangh, he had a large number of friends and people who looked upon him as a leader. In the political field a feeling of envy regarding the Sangh could also be discerned. Many advocates of Hindutva who were active in the field of power politics very much wanted the Sangh to work according to their desires.

Shri Guruji was new to the Sangh and basically a spiritually-oriented person. He had never come into contact with politics or with any public work as such. Outside the Sangh circles, he was practically an unknown person. In such a situation it was no wonder that some people came forward to offer unsolicited advice about the future arrangement for the Sangh.

Many persons, considered to be sympathisers of the Sangh forcefully

argued that after Doctorji the control of the Sangh should not remain with the hands of just one individual but an advisory council of some senior people should be formed for the purpose. Shri Appaji Joshi used to relate an experience to show to what extent efforts were made to see that leading Sangh workers did not accept Shri Guruji's leadership. On Doctorji's passing away, one of his admirers, a lawyer who was committed to Hindutva, called on him (Appaji) and after expressing deep sorrow over Doctorji's death said, "Appaji, you were the right hand man of Doctorji. So you should bear the entire responsibility of Sangh work. Shri Guruji will not be able to handle it."

The reply Appaji gave him showed not only his large heartedness but also the high, idealistic quality of the organisation Doctorji had nurtured. Appaji told him, "If I was Doctorji's right hand, Guruji was his very heart, Doctorji's selection was indeed quite correct. In fact, he had consulted me also about it." Such efforts made within days of Doctorji's passing away to raise a controversy over Shri Guruji's appointment soon came to naught. Everyone felt that Shri Guruji should be accepted as the new Sarsanghachalak. Prior to this, a meeting of five Sanghchalaks took place in Akola, attended among others by Shri Appaji Joshi, Shri Babasaheb Ghatate and Maharashtra Sanghachalak Shri Kashinathrao Limaye. The meeting reviewed the situation and everyone agreed that Doctorji's decision about his successor was quite proper and his selection of Prof. Madhavrao Golwalkar was excellent.

After this unanimous conclusion, they all expressed their confidence in Shri Guruji's leadership and decided that in the homage offering meeting on the thirteenth day of his demise Shri Guruji's name should be officially announced as the new Sarsanghchalak. Accordingly, a function was held on the appointed day at Doctorji's *samadhi* at Reshimbagh to pay homage to his hallowed memory and to make the public announcement of Shri Guruji's name as the new Sarsanghchalak. Accordingly, Nagpur District Sanghchalak Babasaheb Padhye announced Shri Guruji as the new Sarsanghchalak. The first to speak at this function was Babasaheb Padhye, who announced Shri Guruji's appointment as the new Sarsanghchalak. Explaining the Sangh's 'one leader' system '*Ekachalakanuvartitva*' and Doctorji' own arrangement for the future, said in his speech, "In accordance with the final wish of our first Sarsanghchalak

respected Shri Madhavrao Golwalkar has been appointed our new Sarsanghchalak, and now he is for all of us in the place of Dr. Hedgewar. I offer him my first *Pranam* (salutation), as my new Sarsanghchalak.

Doctorji's aged uncle Shri Abaji Hedgewar also spoke on that occasion. In his brief but inspiring speech, he said, "Indeed, our Doctorji has not left us at all; we still see him in the form of Madhavrao Golwalkar. Now onwards, every directive from him is to be obeyed as if it was Doctorji himself."

Shri Guruji also spoke on the occasion as the new Sarsanghchalak. His speech served as a telling index to his supreme self-confidence, humility and his deeply felt reverence for Doctorji. This was his very first speech as the new Sarsanghchalak. Accepting the new responsibility in all humility, he said, "He who cannot bow down to a great man like Doctorji can achieve nothing in his life. I feel very proud to offer my worship to such a great soul. Worship with sandal paste and flowers is of a low order. The real worship is to try to become like the object of worship itself. "*Shivo bhutva Shivam yajet*" — to worship Shiva is to become Shiva--himself. Well, that is the special feature of our Dharma. Doctorji has entrusted to me the onerous responsibilty of the Sarsanghchalak. But this is verily to Vikramaditya's throne. Even if a rustic boy sits on it, he will dispense only an even handed justice. Today an ordinary individual like me is destined to sit on it. But Doctorji will inspire even a person like me to say the right things. Our great leader's hallowed merit will make me do only the right things. Now let us set ourselves to the task with full faith and confidence and take it forward with redoubled vigour and enthusiasm."

These were not mere so much verb. While replying to the condolence messages from public figures and to Swayamsevaks' letters expressing grief over Doctorjis demise also. Shri Guruji evinced the same firmness and restraint. He said ``This is not the time to shed tears. This is the time to keep aside our grief and take Doctorji's unfinished task to its logical fulfilment."

Shri Guruji was fully alert to the moves and machinations of the Sangh's opponents, and had even issued a warning to them in his very first speech as the Sarsanghachalak on July 3. He said, "Doctorji has not handed over to us a hollow organisation that would crumble under in no time. Our organisation is an impregnable citadel. Doctorji has made its

ramparts so strong that those who seek to breach them will have their own heads broken."

After this, a function was held on July 21 to mark the monthly *Shraddha* day of Doctorji, and on this occasion too Shri Guruji made a speech brimming with self-confidence. Giving a fitting reply to those who charged the Sangh with being idolatrous and reactionary, Shri Guruji said, "Some people charge that we Swayamsevaks are hero-worshippers. But that does not bother us in the least. The very fact that even after Doctorji's passing away, all our Swayamsevaks are working as devoted as before proves that Doctorji has taught us not blind faith in any individual but faith in principles and devotion to the nation. Greater the force with which we are struck, greater the force with which we shall rebound like a rubber ball. Our strength will tear all adversities to pieces and will envelop sooner or later the whole of our nation."

In Tune With the Chosen Mission

The departure of the Doctorji and Shri Guruji's acceptance of his directive was a unique and singular sequence of events in the history of any organisation in our country. At that time, there was no official constitution of the Sangh, nor was there any settled procedure for appointing the new Sarsanghachalak. But everyone firmly believed that whatever Doctorji did would be quite proper and conducive to the ultimate success of the organisation. Doctorji had toiled hard for 15 years and forged a strong chain of idealistic workers who had risen above every kind of low tendencies like personal ambition, ego and differences that normally undermine the cohesive unity of an organisation. The peaceful transition that took place was an amazing example of this factor.

Now, the onerous responsibility rested on Shri Guruji to make the organisation bigger and stronger in a speedy manner. How right Doctorji's selection was and how uniquely capable Shri Guruji was in successfully steering the Sangh through the changing situations in the country after 1940, was decisively demonstrated in the following thirty-three years of his helmsmanship. It is not that Shri Guruji' had no natural shortcomings at the time he became the Sarsanghchalak, or there was not any difference at all between him and Doctorji. For instance, in the beginning days, his words used to be sharp and cutting. Sometimes it would even hurt. He

could not suffer incompetence or laxity from anyone. But gradually, he became soft-spoken. He acquired sweetness of speech, curt behaviour was also replaced by affection and tolerance. Self centredess, of course, never touched him. But along with selflessness he was also aware of the qualities required for building the organisation.

Doctorji too was by nature hot-tempered. But after he made the Sangh his life's mission, he had out of sheer will power, not only acquired mastery over his incisive tongue but also all such qualities that are necessary for building up the organisation. Thus did he make himself a living model of a life dedicated to the Sangh. We see a similar transformation in Shri Guruji's life also. Gradually, he became an ocean of love that could assimilate all together people with all their good and bad points, and assigning them suitable role for achieving the nation's good. It was no longer necessary for him to say 'take me as I am'. Deficiencies had to be removed and virtues necessary for taking the people with the worker had to be imbibed. This is what he urged Swayamsevaks to do. And he was himself always alert to ensure that no disparity existed between his words and his deeds.

In matters of principle, Shri Guruji was just like Doctorji - he never accepted any compromise. Doctorji used to fearlessly declare that this is Hindu Nation, which was in fact the very heart and soul of the Sangh's ideology. Doctorji had very carefully fostered it and never did he surrender before anybody on this score. Later on in Shri Guruji's time, many people tried to disprove this self-evident truth and were indulging in anti-propaganda for their own selfish political or communal ends. But, despite all such false propaganda and hostile atmosphere Shri Guruji moved all over the country championing the truth of Hindu nationalism. From every platform, he advocated this as only true basis for building a glorious national life. Even in his talks with non-Hindus he reassured them of their safety but stood fast by this basic theme of the Sangh ideology.

He always insisted that Sangh Swayamsevaks working in different fields should have unshaken faith in the concept of Hindu Nation and project it with thorough clarity. Shri Guruji also strove hard for highlighting the Hindu view of life in all its varied national aspects. At times aggressively and at times softly, as the situation demanded, he clarified and strengthened the concept of our national identity - the *swa* of our

nation. All these things make one wonder, whether Doctorji had not divised the shape of things to come while selecting the young, spiritually inclined erudite scholar like Shri Guruji as his successor.

In June 1940, the Sangh began its journey under the extraordinary ideological and organisational stewardship of Shri Guruji. Our later chapters will describe this journey in the context of Shri Guruji's personality, the growth of the Sangh work, and his role in the changing national situations in the country and abroad.

7 THE GORY CHAPTER OF PARTITION

A decade of far-reaching upheavals in the history of Bharat as also in the world commenced around the same time as Shri Guruji shouldered the responsibility of the Sangh. The Second World War had begun in 1939, and in the initial days the Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler was marching from victory to victory. It was not difficult to visualise that this grave peril facing the British imperialism provided a god-sent opportunity for countries like Bharat to break the shackles of British slavery. Doctorji had a clear grasp of this chance and therefore during his last days he was constantly thinking about how to exploit the situation. This was why he had repeatedly expressed his intense desire for the rapid country-wide expansion of Sangh's strength.

All over the country, there was naturally between themselves discussions over the situation among the leaders of freedom movement. However, there were different views on how to exploit it. Gandhi, Nehru, Subhash Bose - each of them differed from the other. Although everyone agreed that this was indeed a fine opportunity to force the issue, no consensus could be hammered out on how to go about it. During these days, Subhash Babu tried twice to meet Doctorji, but unfortunately, such a meeting could not take place as Doctorji was critically ill during that period. Doctorji was quite well aware that as an organisation the Sangh was not yet that strong and country-wide enough to exploit the situation in a decisive manner. The new Sarsanghachalak, Shri Guruji too, was equally well aware of this predicament.

Although, Sangh had spread out to some provinces outside Maharashtra, still a very large portion of the country had remained untouched. Neither had it been possible to send workers there nor for branches to be started there. Consequently, expansion and consolidation of the organisation became the prime concern of the new Sarsanghachalak. At the same time, the British too were having a rather close look at the Sangh. Assessing the entire situation, Shri Guruji gave a fresh powerful impetus to the expansion of Shakhas. He

did not want, at that stage, unnecessary confrontation with the Government by refusing to accept restrictions imposed by it on the outward form of the work. Rather, he adopted the elastic policy of rendering the restrictions infructuous.

It was during this period that certain external items like the uniform and commands in the Sangh programmes were changed. White shirt, khaki half-pant, black cap and white shoes became the new uniform. Samskrit replaced the English commands in vogue those days. For formations new terms like *Gana, Vahini, Anikini* came to be used and *Ghosh* for 'Band'. Thus Shri Guruji used this opportunity to 'Indianise' the external format of the Shakha. With the result, official restrictions remained on paper, without adversely affecting the Sangh work in the least. Within a few months of his assuming the Sangh's helmsmanship Sri Guruji's leadership was thus put to a fire test for the first time by the British regime through which he came out with flying colours.

Challenge of the Situation

Indeed, Shri Guruji never bothered himself about such superficial difficulties. The main challenge before him was how to speed up the expansion of the work. For this purpose, he himself started briskly touring all over the country. But how could only one man's movements help in spreading the Sangh work fast and wide? For that purpose, it became necessary to send out workers who would be regularly present on the spot and also train the local workers. So, after careful thought an expansion plan was chalked out. It was to send *pracharaks* to all the distant parts of the country. Even before this, workers had left their places for spreading the Sangh work. In fact it was they who had expanded the work in the initial years. But these workers had gone out as students or teachers or for some other personal purpose. There were only a few notable full-time *pracharaks* like Babasaheb Apte and Dadarao Paramarth.

The new plan however, envisaged sending *pracharaks* exclusively devoted to the Sangh work on a fulltime basis. In order to implement this plan in 1941 Shri Guruji moved from place to place carrying a highly emotional appeal that touched the heart-strings of the youthful,

dynamic Swayamsevaks. He tried to bring home to them the fact that the Sangh work was not a leisure-time activity, but something which demanded more and more of their time and energy. The speech he made on the Varsha Pratipada Day in 1942 is an index to his deep anxiety in this respect. In view of its special importance in the history of the Sangh, it would be in the fitness of things to reproduce some of its more important portions. Shri Guruji said:

"It is our great good fortune that we are born in these dangerous times which we must view as most auspicious. The golden moment that arrives in the history of a nation after centuries, is coming our way. If we sleep at such a crucial hour no one would be more unfortunate than us. He only achieves immortal fame who stands up foursquare in the face of adversities. Let us therefore face the present adversity with serenity and determination. Consider it as an excellent opportunity to bring out the best in us."

"Rejuvenation of a fallen nation should be possible at the most within one generation. But what is our condition today? Even after 17 long years of streneous efforts, our work has remained far too limited. The Sangh stands by the Truth and so it will certainly succeed and redeem its pledge. Once we give our word we shall have to prove its worth even if we have to sacrifice ourselves in the process.

So keep aside all your thoughts about family and your personal fortunes for a period of at least one year. Adopt this life of treading on a razor's edge. Be prepared to be hard to yourself. Concentrate all your time, all your thoughts and all your energy on this very task. We have to be vigilant about this and steel ourselves for achieving the success of our Cause."

This appeal went home. About the same time, Shri Balasaheb Deoras too made utmost efforts to send out full-time *pracharaks* from Nagpur. "Now or never" was the nut shell of his call. As a result, hundreds of young Swayamsevaks came forward from many places to work full time. It was verily a divine outpouring of the willingness to make sacrifices for the nation. There were many who gave up their jobs, ideas of marriage, family relationships etc. and took the plunge. Some householders too expressed their willingness to devote full time to Sangh work. One such was Shri Bhaiyaji Dani, who went to Madhya

Bharat as *pracharak*. From June 1942 onwards, *pracharaks* began to be sent to various provinces, and the work acquired a new momentum.

At the same time, Shri Guruji was closely following the developments taking place in the country. The crisis facing the British empire had deepened. Germany in Europe and Japan in the East had given it severe setbacks. The Cripps Mission was sent to Bharat and a proposal to give greater autonomy along with an implied element of country's partition was placed before the political leaders. The Congress rejected the proposal out of hand and the atmosphere for independence hotted up.

Subhash Bose left Bharat and launched a war of independence from Rangoon and Singapore. The Indian National Army was formed and the call "Delhi Chalo" was given by him. In Bharat too, Gandhiji launched the 'Quit India' movement. An atmosphere conducive to a decisive blow for independence prevailed all over the country.

'1942'

However there was no nation-wide organised force in the country that could successfully exploit such a golden opportunity. The Congress did announce the agitation under Gandhiji's leadership, but it had no clear-out plan or programme, nor was any effort made to bring together all the different forces that lay scattered all over the country. It is believed that Gandhiji had merely suggested to the Congress leaders to sit together on August 9, 1942 to think about the possibility of a movement. He had thought of a period of six months for its actual preparations. But the British Government proved too smart and did not let him have the time to carry out the plan. All the prominent leaders of the Congress were arrested as soon as they reached Mumbai. Incensed over this, the people took matters into their own hands and launched a movement without any preparation whatsoever. All the leaders were in jail and a leaderless movement got going on. A directionless agitation can erupt without a leader, but it cannot last long and is bound to peter out without achieving anything concrete. This movement too, met the same fate.

Shri Guruji had surely enough considered whether or not to participate in such a movement and what its possible results, good and

bad, would be. He took into consideration all aspects-the meagre strength of the Sangh, the lack of planning by those conducting the movement, the lack of a clear direction, and the possibility of a national struggle not continuing for long for lack of a single command for the movement. No growing organisation can afford to be short-sighted and take some precipitate action in the heat of the moment and invite its own destruction. It was with this clear understanding that the Sangh, as an organisation, decided not to plunge into the movement.

This decision provoked criticism at the time and even ridicule in some quarters. But later events proved that Shri Guruji, as the supreme guide of the organisation was right. In line with Doctorji's policy he allowed Swayamsevaks to take part in the movement in their personal capacity. And indeed many Swayamsevaks did join the movement.

The Sangh Swayamsevaks also efficiently carried out at many places the responsibility of looking after the underground workers. It was the Sangh Swayamsevaks who led the famous Chimur revolt and were awarded death sentences. The many underground workers whose safety was ensured by Sangh workers included prominent leaders like Krantiveer Nana Patil, Kisan Veer Sane Guruji, Aruna Asaf Ali, Achyut Patwardhan and Kundanlal Gupta. These leaders were by no means adherents of the Sangh's ideology. Actually even after 1942 they remained as opponents of the Sangh. But the Swayamsevaks did not look into their ideological differences while ensuring their safety.

The most important thing for the Sangh was to set up a wide network of Shakhas and increase its organisational power. It was a time when the leadership of an organisation oriented towards a great, nation building goal like the Sangh had to assess from time to time the situation carefully and take responsible decisions. It would therefore be an insult to one's intelligence to question its patriotism, courage and spirit of sacrifice. Those thousands of young men who worked for the Sangh day and night were indeed shining examples of pristine patriotism and dedication. The leaders of the Sangh had to assess a situation prevailing at a certain point of time before deciding about participation in a particular movement. After all, awakening and building up the disciplined might of the people was intended for enhancing the nation's glory.

Shri Guruji's Comprehensive Grasp

In order to explain what was Shri Guruji's thinking *vis a vis* the 1942 movement, it would be in the fitness of things to reproduce here some memories of the well-known labour leader Shri Dattopant Thengadi:

"At the end of September 1942, Shri Guruji was to conclude the programme at Mangalore and proceed to Madras. The 1942 movement had created a turmoil in the minds of many Swayamsevaks and even *pracharaks*. The question troubling them was - if the Sangh was to do nothing even at such a critical juncture what was the use of all its strength built up so far? In those days, I was a *pracharak* in Calicut. As Calicut was near to Mangalore I was asked to go to Mangalore, meet Shri Guruji and acquaint him with what they all felt. So I went and met Shri Guruji."

Narrating what happened in that meeting, Shri Thengadi says:

"I placed their views before Shri Guruji; the gist of what he said in reply is as follows:

1. Right from the beginning, the Sangh has decided to observe certain constraints in some matters. So, when Doctorji decided to participate in the *satyagraha*, he directed the Swayamsevaks to keep out of it and conduct the Shakha work with regularity. He had kept the Sangh as such out of the agitation.
2. Still all such constraints can be kept aside at a critical time like this if by doing so it would help the attainment of freedom, because the work of the Sangh as also all such constraints are meant for achieving an ideal, and freedom is our immediate goal.
3. It would have been good if the Congress had taken the Sangh and other such organizations into confidence before launching the movement. But it is not necessary to be put out merely because it did not do so. The freedom for which the movement is meant to achieve is freedom for all, not just for the Congressmen. So there is no place for institutional ego in such matters.
4. However, the fact that the Congress leaders did not make what they considered adequate preparations before giving the necessary directive for the agitation is a matter of grave concern. As a result, the people had to confront the British Government quite

unprepared. There was no well-thought-out plan. Not that in times of revolution everything will happen as per the plan. Still, some plan is necessary, and if it needs to be changed the initiative should be with the leaders. Such is not the position today. So, the situation is not under the control of the leadership, nor is it in a position to guide and channelise the people's upsurge of feelings and actions. For any revolutionary movement to be so very bereft of planning is highly suicidal.

5. Despite all this, there should be no objection to the Sangh jumping into this agitation if only that would have helped in the attainment of the goal. But on careful thought, I have realised that we cannot reach our goal even if we took part in it with all our might.

6. Some people have an exaggerated notion of the Sangh's present strength. In particular, people in areas where the Sangh is strong imagine that it is equally strong in other parts of the country as well. But the fact is, it is not so. Along with your own adequate strength, some other favourable factors are also needed for the success of an agitation, - as for instance, active sympathy of the general public, resentment against the government in important departments like the army, the police etc. It is difficult to say how deeply concerned the people are, and how they would react when the time to act comes.

But even if we assume that all such factors would be favourable for a revolution, I feel an agitation that we may conduct with all our might can succeed only in a limited area - say, from Belgaum to Gondia. So it is obvious that this would not take us to our goal. For, our area of influence is limited only to the middle of the country. In the event of a successful revolution the freed area would be attacked by enemy forces from all sides, and if the government forces entered the area their atrocities on the people would leave the people in deep despair. The result would be just the opposite of what was envisaged.

"In such a situation, I think the Sangh's participation in the movement would serve no purpose. I am not thinking of our safety as an organisation, but from the point of view of a strategy an agitation at this time, would lead to nothing but further frustration in the minds of the people."

"Here it may be mentioned that Shri Guruji used to always urge those engaged in nation-building to study geo-politics and would refer to a writer named Huntington in this connection."

In the Hour of National Crisis

The 1942 movement set off a big national upheaval and came to a standstill after a time. However it made the British rulers realise the intensity of the Indian aspiration for freedom. But its petering out, with the leaders behind the bars and no planned programme placed before the people naturally resulted in despair among them.

At the same time, the war situation had changed in favour of the so-called Allies. It became virtually impossible for Subhash Bose and his army to enter Bharat and march to Delhi.

Under such circumstances, the Sangh alone came forward to make Herculean efforts, under Shri Guruji's leadership to infuse fresh hope, confidence and enthusiasm among the people. The people too responded enthusiastically. As a result, during the post-1942 period, the Sangh Shakhas spread out rapidly from province to province. Workers were mobilised to move from place to place. Swayamsevaks could be seen flooding in Shakhas all over. With the exception of Bengal, Assam, Orissa and Tamil Nadu the Sangh made significant progress all over the country. In northern parts of Bharat, especially, it became a substantial force. At the same time, however, there were signs that the national goal of independence of *Akhand Bharat* was being fractured.

Right from 1940 onwards, the Muslim League had started advocating the two-nation theory and demanding a separate state for Muslims on its basis. Jinnah had taken the stand that the Congress was a party of Hindus and had no right to speak on behalf of crores of Muslims of the country.

In 1945, the World War came to an end, and although the Allies were victorious, the British found it almost impossible to hold on to Bharat. The Congress leaders were not prepared to accept the demand for Pakistan. Prominent leaders like Rajaji had in fact left the Congress on this issue. Still the Congress stuck to its anti-Pakistan stand. With the war over, Congress leaders were released from jail and the British

regime again started negotiations. The Congress, the Muslim League and the British Government were the main participants in these talks. As there could be no consensus between the Congress and the League, that is between the Hindus and the Muslims, no decision could be arrived at regarding independence for Bharat. This was mainly because of the British rulers' conspiracy to partition Bharat. They were instigating the Muslim League to raise the demand for a separate state and not to come to any kind of agreement with the Congress.

During this tussle affecting the nation's future itself, Shri Guruji had adopted an unequivocal and firm stand. He would clearly affirm in all his speeches that the motherland must remain undivided at all costs and that this could not be a matter for negotiations. During 1945-46, huge crowds would gather to listen to his call. The Shakha network was also spreading far and wide. In the beginning years leaders of Congress would just pooh pooh the idea of Pakistan. But the growing nexus between the British rulers and the Muslim League made them realise that there was a very real possibility of the country's partition.

By this time, thanks to the inspiration of Shri Guruji and tireless efforts of thousands of Sangh workers, more and more youngmen were getting attracted to the Sangh on an unprecedented scale. The Muslims had become ever more intransigent, and partition of the country had become a topic of hot discussion all over the country. The people had come to look upon the Sangh as a powerful organised force that could prevent partition, libarate the country and lead it in the right direction. Shri Guruji's clear and fearless exposition had convinced the national Hindu society that awakening the spirit of nationalism through a powerful organisation of patriots like the Sangh could be the only decisive anti-dote to Muslim intransigency and that appeasement or any kind of temporary compromise would only spell disaster. As a result an atmosphere of idealism and endeavour prevailed everywhere.

However, the leaders, a tired lot, released after years of incarceration, enmeshed in talks and bereft of the fiery spirit of struggle - had become for too eager for power. Still the Congress stuck to its stand against partition and rejected it in its session in 1945. Gandhiji had declared that partition would take place over his dead body and the people had implicitly believed in his words.

So during his country-wide tours, Shri Guruji kept on saying that there was no reason to be unduly disturbed by terrorism, atrocities and threats of rioting. Speaking about the disturbed situation all over the country, he said in his speech at the Vijaya Dashami function at Nagpur in 1946 - "I do not think it is manly to talk about non-resistance. In these times of strife, how can non-resistance ever benefit the country? I feel a violent struggle is unavoidable. You may well refrain from resistance, but will that stop the aggressors from indulging in their black deeds? Do not forget that the sacrificial goat at the Kali temple is an embodiment of non-resistance. We are not to become such sacrificial goats. Self-defence is the natural, legitimate right of every individual and of every society. So to say that one should not take the law into one's own hands merely because security is the government's responsibility is basically illegal."

Country On the Brink of Partition

The result of such inspiring guidance was that people began preparing themselves to fight back those bent upon indulging in atrocities. On the other hand, the British rulers were inciting separatist Muslim forces to raise their ugly heads. After their victory in the war, Britain had a new Government. The Labour Party led by Atlee had come to power, and it was supposed to be in favour of granting independence to Bharat.

Elections in Bharat were announced in 1946. While the Congress fought on the plank of an undivided Bharat, the Muslim league fought on that of creation of Pakistan. At that time, there were separate electorates for Muslims and such seats were won mostly by the Muslim League. Muslims all over the country mostly voted for Pakistan. The Hindu vote was fully with the Congress. The NWFP was, however the only exception where the Congress swept the polls.

Here it must be borne in mind that even in the interior areas of the country, Muslims had massively supported the demand for Pakistan. The provinces which the League had demanded to be included in Pakistan did not include U.P., Bihar, and Madras presidencies but it was here that League received the greatest Muslim support.

The Labour Government sent a Cabinet Mission to Bharat in order

to finalise the plan for transfer of power. But due to a basic difference between the Congress and the Muslim League over the interpretation of the proposal the League rejected it. In the Interim Government formed at the Centre the Muslim League ministers were putting serious hurdles to the Congress ministers at every step. On the other hand, the Labour Government of Britain had no intention of keeping Bharat undivided.

In order to pressurise the demand for Pakistan and to terrorise those opposing it, Jinnah announced August 16, 1946 as a 'Direct Action Day'. On that day, riots were incited all over the country. The barbaric massacres that took place on this day in places like Calcutta, Dacca, Noakhali etc. struck terror in some quarters followed by a reaction of counter-attack in others. In Bihar Congress leaders forcibly suppressed such a reaction. Now the Congress leaders began to feel that it would be better to agree to Pakistan rather than invite a civil war and terrible blood-shed. Artocities on Hindus went on rising in Muslim-dominated areas.

Fortunately, at this crucial time, the Sangh had become quite a powerful factor in Punjab. Shri Guruji was not only warning against the creation of Pakistan but was also personally visiting the affected areas to keep up the people's morale. During those awfully turbulent times, he toured Punjab and Sindh quite often and his meetings there drew huge crowds. He was straining his every nerve to prevent Pakistan from coming into being and the people from leaving their hearths and homes out of panic. Till that time, Gandhiji too had not agreed to the partition of the country. Shri Guruji on his part kept on urging the Congress leaders not to accept Partition under any circumstances. He also used to affirm, in no uncertain terms, that the Hindu society was quite capable of tackling the Muslim goondaism; there would be some suffering, but partition could certainly be avoided. The people too were confident and had felt assured that Gandhiji would not go back on his word.

However, finally, Partition was announced on June 3, 1947. Even a few days earlier, Shri Guruji had declared in a speech in Punjab, "We do not know Pakistan, nor do we accept it. We must take a stand wherever we are, we should put up an organised resistence. If we fear

to go into that fiery ordeal, and leave our motherland, history will say that these people felt no pangs of pain over the cutting up of their dear motherland; These people gave greater importance to their personal and family life than to their own motherland and its valorous tradition. If this happens, there is no doubt that our society will remain for ever in the dark shadow of a feeble mindset. So we must stand firm wherever we are and must resist the onslaught till the very end."

Historic Role of Swayamsevaks

By presenting thousands of Sangh Swayamsevaks as protective a shield to the Hindus, Shri Guruji tried to instil among the people a sense of security and indomitable courage which proved greatly helpful in keeping up the heroic morale of the people. Lord Wavell and Lord Mountbatten on their part, sided with the Muslim League and began to pressurise the Congress leaders to accept Partition. The leaders too began to feel that acceptance of Partition would mean the immediate prospect of freedom, at least for a truncated Bharat, whereas rejecting it would mean continuing the struggle for God knows how long. Having been, psychologically, reduced to the end of tether the leaders were tired of struggle and accepted the alternative of Partition.

Shri Guruji was, as expected deeply shocked and grieved. Nehru did not also accept Jinnah's proposal that the partition should be accompanied by an exchange of minorities. An illusion was also created by the leaders that Hindus would be safe in Pakistan. Actually, even before the partition, in places like Rawalpindi, Amritsar, Lahore etc., atrocities on Hindus had assumed horrible proportions.

But the Hindus had not only faced them with courage but also given a fitting reply at many places. Security squads were set up at many places under the leadership of the Sangh Swayamsevaks. Even in areas where they were just 20 or 30 per cent, the Hindus showed exceptional valour and capacity to defend themselves.

Even in such a situation of uncertainty, Sangh's training camps began - in Phagwara and Sangrur - in Punjab in the third week of July. Shri Guruji visited both the camps and discussed the situation there with the workers. The total attendance of workers at the two camps was 3,700. While they were yet in progress, however news of clashes

and atrocities began pouring into the camps. So the camps were concluded early and the workers, after proper guidance, were directed to return to their places and hold the fort there with fortitude.

Because of the June 3 declaration, the situation had now basically altered. It had therefore become, necessary to give guidelines fresh to the workers and Swayamsevaks in the camps. They were now instructed to go back immediately to their places and arrange for the transit into Bharat of their Hindu brothers, sisters and mothers with their life and honour intact. However they were to stay steadfast there until the very last Hindu was evacuated and sent over to Bharat. The workers went back - many of them to be never seen again. They had given their lives and all for the protection of their Hindu brothers, sisters and mothers.

In this traumatic hour, the Sangh Swayamsevaks proved to be the only ray of hope of succor and survival. Writers of books and articles on Partition have offered fulsome tributes to the valour with which Sangh Swayamsevaks sacrificed themselves for the sake of the safety and honour of the Hindu men and women. Nor did they discriminate while protecting the people. It was due to the security provided by the Sangh that many Congress leaders also could reach Bharat safely.

Shri Guruji himself never talked about this epic saga of service, sacrifice and heroism of the Sangh Swayamsevaks' nor did he ever try to capitalize on it. In his eyes their martyrdom was merely their natural response to the call of duty - the duty to protect their society that is all. At the instance of Sangh, the Punjab Relief Committee was set up to provide many-sided relief to the uprooted Hindus.

Once, after this terrible time was over, when press correspondents asked Shri Guruji in Delhi about the heroic role of the Swayamsevaks, Shri Guruji said, "We do not want to advertise what the Sangh did, because service to the motherland and to our countrymen is not a subject for advertisement. This is our prime duty. But I will say just this much -- if I disclose all that happened there, listeners' hearts will burst forth with the words of, all glory to the Sangh."

Shri Guruji's Inspiring Lead

Shri Guruji was constantly in touch with all the strife-torn areas. On August 15, the country was partitioned. Just before that Shri Guruji

had toured Sindh and also Punjab till August 8. The very idea of how he must have visited all the district places of Punjab in that terror-stricken atmosphere would make one's hair stand on end.

Just one example should suffice to show how he risked even his life in order to be with his suffering fellow-men. The journey was undertaken by road and railway, devastated by rains. Sometimes he travelled in the engine cabin, sometimes in the guard's cabin of a goods train. On reaching the Chahedu bridge on way from Jalandhar to Ludhiana, the party saw that further progress was impossible as the bridge was damaged and the railway track was hanging precariously. Right under the broken bridge, the flooded river flowed furiously. Everyone in the party felt it was too risky to cross the track in that condition, but Shri Guruji did not stop even for a moment. With a firm and sure foot he stepped on the track, quickened his pace and went across. The whole party stared at him. Then the others too followed suit. Shri Guruji's personal assistant Dr. Abaji Thatte once said, the mere memory of that journey was enough to send shivers down the spine.

Shri Guruji had made just a passing reference to this period of time in his address to workers at Indore in 1960. He had then dwelt on the topic of how important the Sangh's daily routine was and how it was not proper to be unnerved by temporary problems. Some portions of this speech made on March 9, 1960, bear repetition, as they throw light on his line of thinking. He said:

"Certain situations that arise in the country from time to time sometimes create a tempest in our minds. Many workers experienced such a tempest during 1942. But even in those days the daily work of the Sangh continued. The Sangh had decided to do nothing directly. But there was an upheaval in the minds of some Swayamsevaks. Not only the people outside the Sangh but even some of our own Swayamsevaks felt the Sangh as an organisation of good-for-nothing people. They felt highly resentful.

"After this, there was again an atmosphere of instability all over the country. The Muslims had triggered off widespread riots. The dark shadow of the coming Partition had begun to spread. In that hour of calamity, our workers no doubt began to think of meeting it with steadfastness and

courage. As a result of their work the Sangh began to expand. But it was too late. What is the point in trying to learn swimming when you are on the verge of drowning? What has gone wrong with our society? How did it get into this bad habit of digging a well only after it feels thirsty? At that time too people began to say we need to be organised. Consequently, there was a flood of Sangh Shakhas in Punjab. I recall saying at that time that the swelling on a sick man's body is not a sign of health. Such a body cannot achieve anything. The same thing happened at that time also. Of course, whatever was possible was done to face the situation, but it was too small."

This speech of Shri Guruji answers many questions that arose in the minds of people in the post - 1947 period about role of Sangh *vis-a-vis* the partition. Quite a few began asking if the integrity of the motherland was dearer to the Sangh than every thing else why did it not stake it all and plunge into a fierce struggle against Partition? The frank answer would be that at that time the Sangh was not strong enough to carry on a popular agitation on its own and prevent Partition. Still it did what it could towards that end. Had the Congress leaders and Gandhiji not accepted Partition and compromised with the British rulers and the Muslim League, the Sangh could have taken the people with it and successfully resisted Partition. But when the Partition was accepted on an official level nothing more could be done.

A Senior Colleague's Analysis

What some senior RSS workers have thought in this regard is significant and worthy of pondering ever. Once Shri Yadavrao Joshi, Chief Pracharak for southern Bharat, was asked why the Sangh contented itself with merely protecting the Hindus and serving the displaced and not resist the partition of the country. In reply, he dwelt on the following aspects of the situation prevailing then:

1. At that time, the strength of the Sangh and the overall awakening and organisation among the people were not adequate enough to prevent Partition.
2. The British announcement about pulling out of Bharat was limited to saying that they would transfer power by the end of June 1948. There was in fact no reference to partition in that statement. But the Mountbatten's decision to do so ten months in advance, along

with the partition of the country on August 15, 1947, was taken because the Congress also agreed to it. Had the Congress decided to wait for 8-10 months more, the Hindu might inspired by the Sangh could have put an end to terrorism and prevented the Partition.

But our leaders like Nehru and Patel, who had initially vehemently opposed Partition, and finally even Gandhiji, came round to accepting it. Still, Shri Guruji continued to speak against it. Had the Congress and the Sangh come together the scenerio would have radically changed. Unfortunately, the Congress looked upon the Sangh as its potential political rival and even sought to destroy it later on.

3. All anti-Sangh forces were naturally thinking that the Sangh would rise in revolt against the Partition and this would give them a golden opportunity to destroy this fiercely nationalist movement. The Congress had carried on the propaganda that the country was becoming free, even if in a truncated form, after centuries of slavery and even the envisaged Partition would not last for ever. It was but temporary and the country would again become one and united. So those opposed to Partition were in a way against Independence itself. Had the Sangh resisted, it would have been dubbed as being anti-freedom and the Government and Congress and all the anti-Sangh forces and would have done their worst to destroy it.

Attainment of Independence was indeed a very big attraction. That the Sangh was not against Independence but only against Partition would have had a very feeble appeal. The onus of exposing those accepting Partition was on the Sangh. Though direct and active opposition was not possible, still Shri Guruji ceaselessly expounded the anti-partition stand of Sangh. Under these circumstances, he considered that consolidating and strengthening the organisation was the real way to serve the national interests. It also avoided the possibility of a fierce confrontation among the Hindus themselves. The pain of partition had perforce to be borne, and the anguish that nothing could be done at that time to prevent Partition has remained forever."

Everyone who thinks dispassionately about the extremely complex situation prevailing then would, we hope, agree with this thoughtful analysis.

Not a Settled Fact Forever : Shri Guruji

Every time Shri Guruji spoke about Partition, there would invariably be anguish and agony in his voice. Partition had become a fact, but he never accepted it as the final outcome. Our undivided motherland was ever the chosen Deity he worshipped. He strove incessantly to keep alive in the heart of every single one of our patriotic country men the dream of uniting once again the broken image of our holy motherland.

In this context, the following incident is quite revealing: In 1953, His Holiness Swami Vishvesh Tirtha of the Pejavar Mutt, Udupi, asked him if Bharat would ever become one and united. In reply, Shri Guruji quoted the Shloka -

Gange cha Yamune chaiva Godavari Saraswati |
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri jalesmin sannidhim kuru ||

and said, "we can never forget our Sindhu". When Swamiji further asked, how could this become possible, he replied, in short, "The partition came about because the Hindus were disorganized and weak. When these deficiencies are removed the country would become one again."

Shri Guruji's Alertness

The Partition plan was implemented. Lakhs of people who had depended upon the leaders assurances suffered untold atrocities. Incidents of martyrdom took place before which even the *Johar* of Chittor would pale into insignificance. Lakhs had to leave their hearths and homes. Their suffering was heart-rending. The Sangh Swayamsevaks comforted them as best they could. Shri Guruji came to be revered as the sole saviour of the Hindu Society. But then the wheel of destiny took an altogether new turn. But before that, it is necessary to refer to an important thing that Shri Guruji got accomplished at the hands of the Government as it related to the post-partition turbulence in Sind. By and large, not much trouble had brocken out in Sind in August, 1947. But when Muslim groups from Bharat reached Punjab and Sind in September, they carried highly inciting stories of atrocities on

Muslims in Bharat, As a result, Hindus there also began to be subjected to attacks since September onwards.

During these times of riots there was a bomb-explosion in the Shikarpur Colony of Karachi. Making this an excuse the Pakistani police started large-scale arrests of Hindus. Around the same time, on September 12 to be precise, there was a meeting between Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Guruji at the Bhangi Colony in Delhi. Gandhiji had also addressed a gathering of Swayamsevaks. The 'Dawn' of Karachi flashed highly exaggerated reports of the two events together claiming that the bomb-explosion in Karachi was a deliberate attempt by Bharat to destroy Pakistan, and that Mahatma Gandhi told Sangh Swayamsevaks that if Pakistan stuck to its policy there would be war between Bharat and Pakistan.

In the wake of the bomb explosion, Barr. Khanchand Gopaldas, the Sanghchalak and 19 other Swayamsevaks were arrested. It was clear that only an understanding between the Government of India and Pakistan on an official level could make their release possible. It was indeed a difficult task. Fortunately, Home Minister Sardar Patel and some top ranking officials of the Home Ministry were also favourably disposed towards Shri Guruji, as they knew what a fiery role the Sangh Swayamsevaks had played in bringing displaced Hindus safely into Bharat. There was indeed a sense of gratitude towards the Sangh for the many-sided relief it had provided to refugees who had come to Bharat. On the premise that two Governments can have an exchange of political prisoners, Shri Guruji suggested an exchange of Muslim prisoners in Bharat for the Hindu prisoners in Pakistan, and the Home Ministry accepted the proposal. The date of exchange was fixed, and it was also decided that it would take place at Ferozpur.

It was thought that along with Barr. Khanchand the other 19 Swayamsevaks would also be brought to Ferozpur. But news came that only Khanchand was brought, because Bharat had only one Pakistan prisoner, named Dr. Qureshi. This Qureshi had become notorious during the partition days and the Pakistani administration very much wanted his release. The plan was for Shri Guruji to go to Ferozpur to personally welcome the released prisoners. A big welcome also had been planned for them. But the Pakistani Government had decided the exchange only on one-to-one basis.

Hence, at the eleventh hour a serious hitch developed. Shri Guruji knew that once the Government of Bharat agreed to the release of Shri Khanchand alone in exchange for Qureshi it would become simply impossible to get the others also released. So it was necessary for the Ministry of Home to send a directive saying not only Khanchand but the other 19 people too must be released by Pakistan in exchange for Qureshi. Time was very short, and Shri Guruji was highly agitated. Shri L. K. Advani was among the Swayamsevaks who had come for the reception. Everyone was in despair - except Shri Guruji, Suddenly, he said: "We can still do something." Then turning to Dr. Abaji Thatte he said, "Aba, get Kakasaheb Gadgil on the phone, I'll talk to him."

At that time, Punjab was under the President's rule. One Shri Bhide was the Chief Secretary. Sardar Patel was not in town, So Kakasaheb Gadgil was officiating as the Home Minister. Shri Guruji talked to Kakasaheb, and immediately a message was sent to the Pakistani administration - if all the 20 persons were not released there would be no exchange. The exchange programme was suspended for the day. But the Government of Bharat's firm stand paid off. The Pakistani Government wanted Qureshi's release so badly that it had to give in to Bharat's demand.

All this took nearly one month. Barr. Khanchand and all the other Swayamsevaks reached Bharat safely. They were given a grand welcome.

In this whole affair, Shri Guruji had played as is evident, crucial role by securing the co-operation of the Government. The event also highlighted the many outstanding aspects of his personality - his cordial relationship with Sardar Patel, Kakasaheb Gadgil and Shri Bhide, his intense concern for the Swayamsevaks, his timely advice to take a firm stand, and his confidence in the final success of his undertaking. Shri Advani said Shri Guruji's planning and his determination has created an indelible impact on the mind.

There is also another memorable incident about Sind which Shri Advani narrated. As stated earlier, on the eve of Partition Shri Guruji was on a tour of Sind from Aug. 5 to 8. By chance, the then Congress President, Acharya Kripalani, too was in Karachi at the same time. He was a close friend of Karachi Sanghchalak, Barr. Khanchand Gopaldas. Had Shri Guruji so desired a meeting between him and Acharya

Kripalani could have been easily arranged. But Shri Guruji reacted very sharply to the suggestion. He said, "What is the point in meeting now?" His words were dripping with anguish over the acceptance of Partition by the Congress. Nobody dared say anything more and the meeting did not take place.

On completion of this tour, Shri Guruji went to Kashmir and had the *darshan* of the Temple at Shrinagar established by the Adi Shankaracharya. On returning from there, he met Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel and briefed them on his Kashmir tour.

8 GANDHIJI'S ASSASSINATION : ANTI-SANGH CAMPAIGN

Sangh Swayamsevaks now busied themselves day and night with the task of ameliorating the grievous lot of our displaced countrymen. Shri Guruji had issued an appeal calling for public cooperation in this stupendous task. Hundreds of relief camps began to be conducted by the *Punjab Sahayata Samiti* in Punjab and the *Vaastu Hara Samiti* in Bengal, where thousands found shelter and solace. During those turbulent and tempestuous days the nation also witnessed how large-hearted Shri Guruji was. No thought of reaction ever crossed his mind. His conduct and his statements during the four to five months immediately after Partition stand as a glowing testimony to the one single thought that occupied his entire being—the creation of a better and brighter morrow for his countrymen.

A Heart full of Nectar

The speech he made at the *Makar Sankranti* function of the Mumbai Shakha on January 14, 1948, gives a peep into this unique nobility of his character. In that speech, he clearly put forth the Sangh's stand vis-a-vis the new era of political independence and transfer of power to the divided Bharat. The speech had no doubt the background of the experiences of the past four to five months. He could clearly see the sense of agony and betrayal raging in the minds of the uprooted people.

He could also see that the people in the party in power, frightened to death by the terrible bloodshed, were getting all too eager to hold the Sangh responsible for riots and violence. Hatred for the Sangh was being spread. In his meeting with Prime Minister Nehru Shri Guruji had also observed that there was not a trace of sympathy for Sangh. The thought of destroying of the Sangh was growing all the time in the ruling party. The Congress, the Muslims, the Communists - all had joined hands in unleasing a barrage of false and vicious propaganda against the Sangh. Despite knowing all this, Shri Guruji, came out with

only the spirit of fellow-feeling, forgiveness and cooperation in the broader national interest. In that historic speech. He said:

``If we think calmly and dispassionately we will realise that after all human life is full of experiments. They naturally have moments of success and failure, joy and despair, victory and defeat. Any experiment must be given enough time to see if it can succeed or not, otherwise it would be an injustice to the experimenter. Whether what is happening is proper or not, we must keep calm and continue to carry on our work. It is necessary that we go to the root of all our present day problems. Without harbouring any feeling of hatred, vengeance or hostility in our hearts, we must serenely go ahead on our chosen path of national consolidation.

``We must be able to digest everything that provokes us and to forge ahead. We should not allow the poison of anger to pollute the nectar of love and goodwill in our hearts. However good or bad the people around us may be, they are after all of our own society, our own nation. Whatever be their ideological approach, they too have done good work, they too have made sacrifices. Then, for whom shall we express love, generosity and fellow-feeling if not for them? So let us not be perturbed by what someone says or does. Let us do away with the differences that are raising their ugly heads once again. Let us recall the motto of oneness - '*vayam panchadhikam shatam* - and pledge all our might to the creation of a homogeneous nation. We should not mind even if we are required to sacrifice our lives in accomplishing this great task."

This attitude of rising above every kind of negative feelings was displayed not only by Shri Guruji but also by the entire powerful, disciplined country-wide organisation which he led. This period of transfer of power was one of fear and suspense in Delhi. During this period the Sangh co-operated in every possible manner not only in providing security to the citizens but also in the Government's efforts to that end. Swayamsevaks also provided security at Gandhiji's residence in Delhi's Bhangi Colony. Gandhiji too visited the Shakha, met the Swayamsevaks and praised the work the Sangh was doing. When a joint appeal was to be issued to persuade Gandhiji to give up his fast, Delhi Prant Sanghchalak Lala Hansraj Gupta readily signed it. There was

not a single incident of the Sangh causing a law and order problem anywhere in the country.

When the ruling circles witnessed the massive gatherings of lakhs at the Sangh functions to listen to the life giving *mantra* of national harmony, they felt that a formidable challenge for the Congress was emerging. So, efforts were started to suppress the Sangh in every possible way. The Sangh already had some bitter experiences of this in November 1947. The first was the sudden ban imposed on the mammoth congregation of nearly one lakh Swayamsevaks proposed to be held at Chinchwad near Pune on the 1st and 2nd of that month. Actually, the Home Minister Sardar Patel was expected to be personally present on this occasion as the chief guest. Consequently, an atmosphere of tremendous enthusiasm had prevailed everywhere.

However, the Bombay Government's ban order came as an unexpected shock of disappointment to one and all. This unnecessary and unjustified step also caused keen resentment among the Sangh workers. But neither Shri Guruji nor any worker thought of defying the ban. As an alternative; Shri Guruji's programmes were arranged at 13 different places in Maharashtra and they all went off successfully. In no speech at these places did Shri Guruji express displeasure or criticise the ban. The main theme of all his speeches was that lack of being organised as a homogenous society was at the root of all ills. He warned that if the society was not well organised independent Bharat would be in for serious troubles. He also held the disorganized state of the society and its amnesia of identity responsible for the Partition.

Another pointer was provided at the deliberations in the Chief Ministers' Conference held in Delhi in November, 1947. It looked as if the main topic of discussion in the conference was the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The main charge was that the RSS was engaged in violent activities and hence stern steps must be taken to curb it. Finally, it was decided that rather than banning the activities of the Sangh as such, action should be taken only against its individual offenders. It was also decided to keep a close watch on the Sangh's activities. The notification banning the Sangh issued on Feb. 4, 1948, informed the people about the discussions in this conference.

Yet another similar occasion was the Meerut session of the

Congress held in same month, where the RSS was the main topic of discussion. Many speakers at this session demanded a ban also on the Sangh. There were also in evidence indications of official thinking in this direction. In a public meeting in Amritsar on Jan. 29 Prime Minister Nehru declared that he would crush the Sangh. When Shri Guruji read the report, he retorted, 'We shall certainly defeat all such attempts to crush us. We have not grown out of somebody else's favours or mercy. So nobody's opposition can put an end to our work. Sangh's mission does not stand on the strength of paper resolutions and so no directives on paper can demolish it." Probably even Shri Guruji was not aware of how near at hand would the occasion arise to test the truthfulness or otherwise of his affirmation.

Plea for National Consensus

On the evening of 30th Jan. 1948, Shri Guruji was present at a meeting of prominent citizens of Madras organised by the Sangh. Tea was being served and Shri Guruji was holding the cup in his hands. Suddenly, before he could take it to his lips, the evil tidings came - somebody had shot Gandhiji dead at the Birla Bhavan in Delhi during his prayer meeting.

On hearing the terrible news, Shri Guruji put down his cup, and sat still for a long moment, lost in thought. Then he exclaimed in anguish - 'What a misfortune for the country!' Cancelling the rest of his tour, he flew back to Nagpur. Before leaving Madras, he sent telegrams of condolence to Pt. Nehru, Sardar Patel and Shri Devdas Gandhi. At the same time he also issued a country-wide directive to keep all Sangh Shakhas closed for thirteen days as an expression of grief over the tragedy.

On returning to Nagpur, he immediately wrote letters to Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel expressing his deep sense of anguish over Gandhiji's tragic end.

In his letter to Pandit Nehru, he wrote, in essence,

"The attack on such a deft helmsman who held so many diverse natures in a single string bringing them to the right path, is indeed a treacherous act not merely to an individual but to the whole country. No doubt you, that is the Government authorities of the day, will deal suitably with that traitorous individual. But now is the testing time

for all of us. The responsibility of safely steering the ship of our Nation ahead in the present troubled times with an unruffled sense of judgement, sweetness of speech and single-minded devotion to the Nation's interest is upon all of us."

In the letter to Sardar Patel, Shri Guruji wrote:

"Let us shoulder the responsibility that has fallen upon us by the untimely passing away of that great unifier, keeping alive the sacred memories of that soul who had tied diverse natures in a single bond and was leading them all on a single path. And let us, with the right feelings, restrained tone and fraternal love, conserve our strength and cement the national life with everlasting oneness."

Shri Guruji concluded both the letters by saying:

"On behalf of the Organisation which is built on this faith and on this basis of oneness, I pray at the Feet of the All-Merciful Lord to guide all the children of this Nation on the right path and inspire them for the building up of a pure and powerful national life."

Both these letters show how utterly noble Shri Guruji's mind was and how deep his reverence for the departed leader, as also his sincere offer of cooperation in that hour of national crisis. The Sangh Swayamsevaks held condolence meetings at Nagpur and elsewhere to pay homage to Gandhiji. Shri Guruji circulated a similar message through the Associated Press also. In it too he had appealed preserving the nations's unity and fellow-feeling among all the countrymen. But in the wake of the terrible tragedy, wild propaganda against the Sangh became the order of the day. Reckless, motivated rumours became rife. Everywhere, an explosive atmosphere against the Sangh was sought to be built up. Instead of reciprocating Shri Guruji's call for co-operation and goodwill, dastardly designs were made to link the Sangh with Gandhiji's assassination.

In a statement issued to the press, Shri Guruji observed "Living in these critical times the country needed a great unifier and pacifier that the great soul was" and called upon all his "brother Swayamsevaks to keep calm under any kind of situation and behave with amity and affection, and understand that the trouble, given by people who had fallen prey to misunderstanding, was also an index of the great love and respect that our countrymen felt for the great man who had

brought glory to our motherland in the eyes of the whole world."

Unfortunately, even such a noble statement could not find a place in the media. Incitement against the Sangh continued unabated. In Maharashtra and some adjacent areas the hate campaign was given a Brahmin-non-Brahmin twist also. The result was that houses of a large number of people were attacked, looted and torched taking a toll of some lives also. Thousands of families were rendered homeless.

All over the country the Sangh Swayamsevaks and workers had to undergo terrible suffering both physical and mental. Still no one retaliated, nor was there any bitterness in their speech. Everything was borne in silence. Behind this suffering lay not fear but a spirit of exceptional restraint on their part. Shri Guruji had also sent a directive everywhere that there must be no retaliation.

Shri Guruji was himself made the target of people's wrath. But the extraordinary steadfastness, unique restraint and large heartedness he displayed on that occasion were but a sign of the purity of his worship of God in the form of our society. It was a moment of high tension. On February 1, 1948, thousands of people swarmed in front of Shri Guruji's residence in Nagpur and began hurling stones. They raised wild and even obscene slogans. Looking to the gravity of the situation, Swayamsevaks who came to guard his place, asked for his permission to put the attackers in their place. Shri Guruji replied, "I do not want that my own countrymen's blood should be shed in front of my house for the sake of my safety. No one need guard me. You may all go home."

The Fire Ordeal Begins

The same day police were posted at Shri Guruji's residence as a security measure, but they were removed in the evening. A public meeting was held in the Chitinis Park in Nagpur in which there were venomous outpourings against the Sangh. Again, the Swayamsevaks thought that something untoward might happen, so as a precaution they requested Shri Guruji to shift to a safer place. But his reply only showed that the thought of personal safety did not so much as touch his mind. Calmly he said, "It seems the crisis all around us has unsettled you. You are highly disturbed. So it would be better if you

leave me in peace. Do not worry about me at all. Why do you press me to go somewhere else? If the very people for whom I am working do not want me, where can I go and why should I? Now it is time for my *sandhya*, so please go home". With these words he went into the inner room.

But the trouble the Swayamsevaks were anticipating did not errupt, because by this time police were again posted at Shri Guruji's residence and it became impossible for the miscreants to reach anywhere near it. However, in the afternoon, some anti-social elements did attack Dr. Hedgewar's *samadhi* at Reshim Bagh. They indulged in that barbarous act against the memorial of a great man who had dedicated all his life to the service of the Hindu Society.

The meaning of posting police at Shri Guruji's place became clear after midnight. Shri Guruji was awake. He was receiving information about the atrocities being committed on the Swayamsevaks in various places. He was in deep agony over what was happening, but it seemed he was thinking of something else. Past midnight, a police vehicle drew up at his house and he was served with a warrant. The Sarsanghachalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was arrested on the charge of Gandhiji's assassination.

However, Shri Guruji only smiled when he heard the charge and remained calm as ever. Quietly he prepared himself to accompany the police officials to jail. Bidding farewell to the workers present there he said, "Clouds of suspicion will soon be dispelled and we shall come out without a blemish. Till that time, there will be many atrocities, but we have to bear them with great restraint. I am confident that our Swayamsevaks will successfully come through this fiery ordeal."

The police vehicle drove off. Shri Guruji was charged under Sections 302 and 120 of the Criminal Procedure Code and was clamped behind bars. What a lurid example of the depths of thougthlessness to which unrestrained greed for power can descend and make man lose himself in trampling under feet justice and godliness. And all this came to pass in the very beginning of our country's independence. The news of Shri Guruji's arrest spread like wild fire. Sarkaryawaha Shri Bhaiyaji Dani sent telegrams to all Shakhas - "Guruji interned, be calm at all costs."

After this, the Government undertook some more steps against the

Sangh. On Feb. 2, it issued an ordinance declaring Sangh activities illegal. Charging the Sangh with violence the Ordinance said "the Government considered it its duty to put down such a fanatic manifestation of violence, and so, as a first step, the RSS was being declared illegal."

Later, on Feb. 4, it was officially announced that the Sangh was banned. Sangh workers and Swayamsevaks were arrested throughout the country. There were more than 30,000 arrests. The atmosphere in the whole country was poisoned with anti-Sangh rumours, wild charges and venomous tirades against the Sangh. So-called leaders cropped up like mushroom and began talking of finishing off the Sangh. Rumour mongering went to the extent of implicating that Shri Guruji's direct hand in Gandhiji's assassination and that Madanlal, the Government approver had even recognized him. Shri Guruji had come to know in jail that the Sangh had been banned. When, on Feb. 5 his lawyer friend Dattopant Deshpande went to see him Shri Guruji handed over to him a statement saying the Sangh was disbanded and asked him to get it published. In this statement Shri Guruji said,

"It has always been the policy of the RSS to be law-abiding and carry on its activities within the bounds of law. Therefore, since the Government has declared the RSS an unlawful body it is thought advisable to disband the RSS till the ban is there, at the same time denying all the charges levelled against the organisation."

Shri Deshpande tried to send Shri Guruji's directive all over the country by wire, but all those wires were stopped in Nagpur itself by the Govt. Still the directive was circulated everywhere through other means and was published in the newspapers also. The funny part was that the first paper to publish it on Feb. 6 was Pakistan's 'Dawn'! Indian newspapers only followed suit. Some people even thought that this was the end of Sangh. The opponents of the Sangh might have well heaved a sigh of relief at the thought that this country-wide challenge to them was once and for all crushed out of existence.

During those days the then D.I.G. Hira Chand Jain once went to the jail to interrogate Shri Guruji and directed the jailer to produce Shri Guruji before him. Thinking that Shri Guruji might have become quite unnerved on being arrested on such serious charges as murder

and conspiracy, the D.I.G., who was quite a hefty figure placed his foot on the table and began to smoke just to overawe Shri Guruji. When Shri Guruji was brought the D.I.G. tauntingly remarked, "Oh, so you are Guru Golwalkar the Sarsanghachalak! But you appear so thin and fragile!" Instantly, Shri Guruji retorted, "Dr. Hedgewar had not considered the size required for the Sarsanghachalak, otherwise he would have made you or some buffalo as the Sarsanghachalak!"

Taken aback at Shri Guruji's cutting rejoinder, the police officer immediately put down his foot and said to the jailer, "Get a chair for Guruji." After Shri Guruji was seated the D.I.G. asked, "Guruji, what do you know about Mahatma Gandhiji's assassination?" Shri Guruji replied, "Why should I tell you? Whatever I have to say I will say in the court. And I shall also see that Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel will have to be present in court." By this time the Government had also realised that its efforts to involve Shri Guruji or the Sangh in this affair would fall flat in the court. Consequently on Feb. 7 the Government suddenly withdrew the charge of conspiracy of murder and issued a new ordinance ordering Shri Guruji's internment under the National Security Act.

In Jail

In jail Shri Guruji remained quite calm and serene as ever. He never thought of what rights he enjoyed as a security prisoner and what facilities he could demand. For the first few days, he was not even given newspapers. Later on this facility was made available to him. But during his stay in jail he was never very much interested in reading newspapers. Similarly in the initial days he was given just a *durrie*, a bedsheet and two blankets. All the same he never asked for anything. He was content with what was made available. Once his spectacles were damaged and he found it difficult to read. This also gave him a constant headache. But he neither asked the jail authorities to get his glasses repaired nor complained about his headache.

He was very particular about keeping his cell and the surrounding areas spotlessly clean. Not a piece of paper would be seen lying around. He also gave lessons in cleanliness to the prisoner deputed to attend on him. Shri Guruji would ask him to bathe first before taking his bath. His behaviuor with the other prisoners and the warders too was full

of affection. He took interest in their domestic affairs also. Even when he was alone in his cell, he was quite at ease with himself. Rather he looked upon this solitude as another opportunity for meditation that had come his way eleven years after Sargachhi. He had a set routine in jail- getting up at five in the morning, he would perform his morning duties, then pace up and down his room reciting the Gita. Before taking his bath, he would regularly perform *Yogasanas*, which he would teach his other jail mates also. After that a few hours would be spent in *Sandhya*, meditation and such other spiritual practices. The time till the lunch hour would be spent in reading works like *Dnyaneshwari, Tukaram Gatha, Valmiki Ramayana, Tulsi Ramayana, Mahabharata, Dasbodha* etc.

But the time he spent most happily was in meditation. About this, Shri Appaji Joshi once said, "I have seen him while he was immersed in meditation. His face looked so serene that it was as if he was floating in a sea of spiritual bliss. I am sure he must have seen God. It was the magic of his contact with Doctorji that could pull him away from this supreme individual bliss and make him dedicate his life in the service of the nation. It was indeed the Sangh's great good fortune."

Shri Guruji would sit in the same position for reading as when he sat for meditation. Nobody ever saw him reading while reclining or pacing up and down. Apart from meditation, Shri Guruji would spend his time in recalling various Sangh Shakhas and the Swayamsevaks there. Referring to this in his speeches later on Shri Guruji once said, "I was alone in room and I had the full 24 hours to myself. Many of these would be spent in recalling various Shakhas and the Swayamsevaks which had visited there. It was as if a meeting was going on and I was getting acquainted with them. Such an exercise in imagination was no doubt painful, but I ignored it and kept on doing my duty." What a complete identification with the work and workers of the Sangh!

During his stay in jail, Shri Guruji never once lost faith in the justice, truth and the ultimate triumph of Sangh. After Feb. 15, Appaji Joshi, Babasaheb Ghatate, Baccharaj Vyas, Bapusaheb Sohoni and other prominent workers of Sangh were also rounded up and lodged along with him.

Once someone asked him - "We are doing Sangh work with all dedication. Then why should this calamity befall us at all ?" Shri Guruji replied, "It is the Sangh's strength that has caused this calamity and it will also be because of the Sangh's strength that it will eventually be removed. When the Sangh passes this crucial test it will grow much more strong and fast than before."

His unwavering faith and mental fortitude were also in striking evidence on yet another occasion. In Madhya Pradesh many jailed Swayamsevaks had filed *habeas corpus* petitions in court. As the charges under which the police had arrested them were found baseless the High Court had rejected these charges, and the Swayamsevaks began to be set free one after another. Shri Guruji's companions also urged him to get himself released by similarly petitioning the Court. But he resolutely declined saying." Those who have arrested me will themselves set me free when they think it proper. I won't do anything for my own release."

Extended Jail

The period of his internment was coming to a close on Aug. 6, 1948. Still his release was doubtful, as the Government could have extended his internment by another six months. But the Government did not do so. On the appointed day, Shri Guruji was released and he returned to his residence in Nagpur. The news of his release swiftly spread among the Swayamsevaks and sympathisers and a sense of relief and joy filled their hearts. Now it was hoped that some way could be found to get the ban on the Sangh lifted. But this hope proved to be short-lived, for, immediately on his release the following restrictions were placed on his activities:

1. To live within the Municipal limits of Nagpur; not to leave the same without the previous consent of the District Magistrate of the place in writing.
2. Not to address any public meeting.
3. Not to publish directly or indirectly any matter in any newspaper, journal or magazine without the previous approval of the District Magistrate.

4. Not to engage himself or associate with any person engaged in any activity tending directly or indirectly to excite disaffection against or to embarrass the Provincial or Central Government or to promote a feeling of hatred or enmity between different classes and subjects of the Indian Dominion or to disturb public peace.

Reacting to this order Shri Guruji said it just meant he was being transferred from a smaller jail to a much bigger one "Only my prison walls have been extended" — he exclaimed. On reading the fourth restriction Shri Guruji smiled, as it was about not associating with people creating disaffection against the Government. In order to expose the ridiculous nature of this condition, he wrote a letter to the Government, saying "I may be provided with a list of people indulging directly or indirectly in such activities so that it would be easy for me not to associate with them!"

Perhaps the Government had forgotten to include the condition that he should not also write letters to anybody. Taking advantage of this, Sri Guruji wrote to Prime Minister Nehru and Sardar Patel on Aug. 11 expressing his concern over the needless ban on the Sangh. In his letter to Nehru he wrote:

"It is a fact that I could not then understand why a very large number of my friends and I were arrested and detained and the subsequent steps taken in respect of the work I was representing. I have tried to convince myself by the repeated argument that the times were extraordinary and hasty and unbalanced action was its result. I do not wish to believe that persons occupying the places of highest importance can or should be susceptible to impatience, hastiness or loss of mental balance. But that is the only conclusion forced upon me when after six month's detention, when sufficient evidence has come to light and I and my work have been absolved from all the astounding allegations laid at our door, I have been served with an order interning me in Nagpur and restricting my activities in such a manner that my release has become a fresh imprisonment in a more extensive jail.

"But whatever the mental condition of the authorities in general and yourself in particular may have then been and may now be, I am grateful to the Almighty that he has not let my mind turn sour and that I maintain my spirit of love and friendship and oneness. I hope

and expect all my co-workers to share my sentiments. I would have spread this massage of love to all, preaching to all not to let feelings of hurt or rancour poison their hearts, but the restrictions laid upon me prevent me from doing this necessary duty. I would also have appreciated if instead of being placed under such unwarranted restrictions, I would have been given a chance to clear my position and to convince you of my feelings and readiness to cooperate with the Government in these crucial times. Even now I hope our approchement is not afar.

"Meanwhile let us cherish now and for ever cordial friendly relations, not allowing the ghastly dream of the last few months to embitter our mutual love."

Demand for Justice

The letter written to Sardar Patel also expressed similar feelings of friendly cooperation. But till Sept. 24, there was no reply to either of the letters. So on Sept. 24 he wrote to both of them again. In the meanwhile, the Government had solved the problem of Hyderabad's accession to Bharat. Beginning his letter to Nehru with a laudatory reference to this event Shri Guruji made a direct demand for justice. He wrote.

"It is now almost eight months and nothing can remain to be investigated into. I am sure you are convinced that the allegations against the RSS have been found to be without foundation in facts. It is, therefore, a case for simple justice, which we have a right to expect from a Government which we have always considered our own."

Discussing the nefarious and violent activities of the Communists in this letter, Sri Guruji wrote:

"During this period, the RSS having been disbanded, the intelligent youth are rapidly falling into the snares of Communism. With the alarming happenings in Burma, Indo-China, Java and other neighbouring states, we can envisage the nature of the menace. The one effective check of the RSS no longer exists. The Communists had always considered the RSS as their main obstacle and had tried to denounce and vilify it. I hope you will consider this problem coolly and

help create an atmosphere in which the RSS will be able to work honourably and help the Government fight the menace, on its own cultural lines. A candid withdrawal of the charges levelled against the RSS and generous lifting of the ban imposed upon it will go a long way in bringing about the desired atmosphere."

In his letter to Sardar Patel too Shri Guruji referred to Communist machinations and wrote at the end:

"In answer to the call of the times alone, please take a decision. I and all my co-workers have been striving from the very start to cooperate with you to bring the situation under control and make our Motherland invincible."

Replies were received from both Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel. Patel's letter was in reply to the letter of August 11 while that of Nehru was in reply to that of Sept. 24. Patel in his letter observed:

"There can be no doubt that the RSS did service to the Hindu society. In the areas where there was the need for help and organisation, the youngmen of the RSS protected women and children and strove much for their sake". Of course, he had also made some unfounded insinuations that the RSS men had indulged in murdering innocent Muslims.

Patel also added "I am thoroughly convinced that the RSS men can carry on their patriotic endevour only by joining the Congress and not by keeping separate or by opposing".

Nehru wrote that the RSS was communal and its leaders' actions were not in keeping with what they said. The letter made no mention at all of the charges against the Sangh or of Shri Guruji's demand for withdrawing the ban on it.

In the meanwhile many eminent people in the country had also started feeling that injustice had been done to the Sangh. The anti-Sangh storm had abated and people had started openly saying that the Sangh was innocent and even began praising its patriotism and spirit of sacrifice. Those who were dispassionate and had the good of the country at heart also started advising the Government to withdraw the ban. Lakhs of letters calling for the lifting of the ban were sent to the President and the Prime Minister.

Whatever be the reason, on Oct. 13, all restrictions on Shri Guruji's activities were removed. He could now go out of Nagpur. He decided to go to the capital and directly talk to the Government leaders for removing the injustice done to the Sangh and reached Delhi on Oct. 17. Thousands of people thronged spontaneously at the railway station to accord him a hearty welcome although no newspaper had reported about his visit — a clear proof of the depth of reverence the people felt for him despite all the anti-propaganda and dastardly charges levelled against him.

Now all eyes were set on Delhi. On the very day of his arrival there, Shri Guruji called on Sardar Patel. The talks during this meeting remained inconclusive, so there was another meeting on Oct. 23. In both these meetings Sardar Patel insisted that the RSS should merge in the Congress, to which Shri Guruji gave a firm "No". Still Sardar Patel asked for more time on the plea that the Provincial Governments needed to be consulted and left for Mumbai.

In his correspondence as well as talks with Nehru and Patel Shri Guruji took the stand that as the Central Government had imposed the ban on the Sangh and as all charges against the Sangh had been proved false and baseless the onus was on the Central Government to either lift the ban or prove the charges in a court of law. But the Government went on shifting its stand without daring to answer Shri Guruji's point blank demand. The issue remained unresolved and Shri Guruji stayed put in Delhi. Swayamsevaks from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and elsewhere came in large numbers to call on him. Many outsiders also began calling on him and the media too came and asked - what was the next step the RSS was proposing to take?

One day, an unexpected oral message was received from Sardar Patel - 'No more discussions are possible, so you may return to Nagpur.' Shri Guruji was quick to understand what the message meant. It meant the Government had adopted the policy of keeping the problem of the ban hanging fire. Now it became necessary to make some moves at the public level. Shri Guruji was determined not to leave Delhi. On Nov. 2 he called a press conference and distributed two lengthy statements answering every single so-called charge on the Sangh. He had firmly rejected the idea of merging the Sangh in a political party. He also

insisted that organisations engaged in cultural activities should be allowed to work without let or hindrance. However Shri Guruji had still not left the hope of getting justice, so he rejected the Government's hint to leave Delhi.

Staying in Delhi for a full ten days, from Nov. 3 Nov. 13 Shri Guruji tried to awaken the Government's sense of justice. Prime Minister Nehru and Home Minister Patel had returned to the capital. Shri Guruji kept up his correspondence with them. In his letter to Nehru on Nov. 3, he had challenged the so-called mass of evidence against the Sangh that the Government had in its possession and asked for an appointment. He also sent a detailed letter to Patel on the 5th. This letter referred to the delaying tactics of the Government *vis-a-vis* lifting the ban on the Sangh, and to the heroic restraint of the Sangh Swayamsevaks and also expressed deep disappointment at the Government attitude. It showed the intense yearning of his patriotic heart to see that independent Bharat stood on a firm foundation of peace and harmony from its very start. He wrote:

"Keeping in mind the delicate situation in the country and with a view to removing dissensions for the sake of a glorious future, I had instructed all my Swayamsevak brothers to be peaceful and I strove for a peaceful settlement. I tried my utmost to see that between the Congress, which is capable of delivering goods in the political field and is at present the ruling party, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in the cultural field, which has achieved success in creating a matchless spirit of patriotism, brotherhood and selflessness among the people, there be no bad blood, there be only everlasting mutual love, one supplementing and complementing the other, both meeting in a sacred confluence. I extended my hand of cooperation. With utmost regrets I have to say that you have chosen to ignore my best intentions. My heart's desire to see the converging of both the streams has remained unfulfilled. Maybe that the All Merciful Lord is indicating to me a different path and may be the seed of future glory of this divine *Bharatavarsha* is imbedded therein".

Looking back one wonders - what would have happened if the confluence of these two streams had become possible at that time? What would have happened if Shri Guruji's hope had been fulfilled?

But these are now idle thoughts. The hand of willing co-operation extended by Shri Guruji was thoughtlessly rejected by a Government led by titans like Nehru and Patel. Shri Guruji once again expressed a desire to have a frank exchange of views with Government leaders, but both Nehru and Patel turned down the proposal. Shri Guruji also wrote to them - to Nehru twice, on the 8th and the 12th and to Patel on the 13th. But the Government kept repeating that it was not possible to lift the ban. They said the behaviour of the Swayamsevaks did not accord with the leader's policies, so there was no point in holding talks and Shri Guruji should immediately return to Nagpur. A press note issued by the Government on the 12th even threatened Shri Guruji that he would be arrested if he did not return to Nagpur.

Government's Abrasive Attitude

Shri Guruji realised that the Government had more or less closed all the doors for conciliation and if he stuck to his decision not to leave Delhi he could be arrested any time. It had become clear that the possibility of getting justice through talks had come to an end. What was left was to peacefully defy the Government's ban and resume the Sangh's activities. Shri Guruji hinted at this in his talks with the workers at Delhi. He even kept ready an open letter to all Swayamsevaks. At the same time, he also wrote out a message in his own hand for country-wide circulation.

On the night of the 13th a police vehicle drew up at the residence of Lala Hans Raj Gupta and Shri Guruji was arrested and taken away. Ironically enough, this sincere devotee of the motherland was arrested by the Congress Government of independent Bharat under that notorious 'Bengal State Prisoners Act' of 1818, which had been denounced during the freedom movement as a 'black law'. by the same Congresse leaders Shri Guruji was flown to Nagpur and lodged in the prison there.

The action of the Government had slammed the door on finding any peaceful solution through mutual talks and a nation-wide anti-ban *Satyagraha* by the Sangh for getting justice became inevitable.

9 SUCCESSFUL SAGA OF SATYAGRAHA

The Delhi talks had broken down, the demand for justice was ignored, and propaganda against the Sangh continued. The Sangh was therefore left with no other option except to insist on the truth. Shri Guruji addressed an open letter to all Swayamsevaks explaining in detail the gist of the talk with the Government. The letter made it clear that the intended move was not for doing anything for the sake of institutional pride or for personal prestige. Rather, it emphasized that whatever was to be done was only in the interest of the country. Shri Guruji wrote:

"This state of affairs is humiliating. To continue to submit meekly to this atrocious tyranny is an insult to the honour of the citizens of free Bharat and a blow to the prestige of our civilised free State. As patriotic citizens, it is our sacred duty to refuse to submit to arbitrary tyranny. We have, therefore, to discharge our duty, to stand up and vindicate the honour of the State and right of the citizens."

Thus, giving the Swayamsevaks a hint in advance of the coming *Satyagraha*, Shri Guruji also called upon them to remain calm and give no place to bitterness in their minds. The message he circulated has gone down in history as the `Clarion Call'. The concluding portion of the inspiring call is given herein, in order to give an idea of the whole.

Battle of 'Dharma' with 'Adharma'

"I therefore, request you to stand up for our great Cause. Truth and Justice are with us. And where Truth exists the Almighty showers His Blessings on it. With absolute faith in Him and unswerving devotion to our holy Motherland let us start on our peaceful campaign for vindicating the justice of our Cause.

"We stand for Truth. We stand for justice. We stand for our National Rights. With implicit faith in the Just God of Truth let us march on.

"This is a battle between Dharma and Adharma, justice and injustice, large hearts and small minds, love and hate. Victory is certain, because God is with Dharma and victory is with God.

'Let the skies reverberate with the call 'victory to Bharat' and rest not till the goal is reached. *Bharat Mata-ki Jai.*'

The Government had already come to know that the Sangh Shakhas would start functioning again. The news had caused a turmoil among the top-ranking leaders of the Congress. In a public meeting in Gwalior on Dec. 5, Sardar Patel said "Some people say the Sangh is going to start a *Satyagraha*. But these people can never conduct a *Satyagraha*, their *Satyagraha* can never succeed, because their minds are unclean. We had advised them to join the Congress and had tried to bring about a change of heart among them but they have chosen the path of confrontation. I warn them, we are ready to face such challenges."

Even while the Government was issuing such threats the Sangh launched its *Satyagraha* on Dec. 9 under the Sarkaryawaha Shri Bhaiyyaji Dani's leadership by holding Shakhas all over the country. The ban was on holding Shakhas, so the *Satyagraha* consisted of holding the Shakhas, Shouting slogans like *Bharat Mata-ki Jai* and 'Long live Sangh'. Batches of Swayamsevaks would come out to hold Shakha and the police would take them away into custody. The Shakha would continue with its routine programmes till the police intervened. Strict discipline would be observed even while peacefully courting arrest. At many places, thousands of people also assembled to watch the *Satyagraha*. The arrested Swayamsevaks would be dumped into police vans and sent to jail.

The Satyagraha led to the ban on Sangh becoming a hot topic of discussion all over country. Thousands of walls came to be plastered with the demand - 'Prove the charges against the Sangh, or lift the ban.' At the same time, lakhs of copies of pamphlets refuting the charges against the Sangh and explaining its just and nationalist stand were distributed. There was also great enthusiasm among the Swayamsevaks for the movement. Ignoring every kind of difficulty on their way, Swayamsevaks jumped into the struggle in their thousands. Hundreds gave up their jobs and countless students suspended their studies. No one worried about his physical suffering or domestic problems. The *Satyagraha* which began on Dec. 9, showed no signs of abating. With every passing day, public support and sympathy for the Sangh went on growing.

Eye Opener for the Government

The Government had surmised that this movement of inexperienced young men would peter out in a few days. Nor did it expect the number of *Satyagrahis* to cross a couple of thousands. The way Pt. Nehru viewed the *Satyagraha* became evident in his remarks at a meeting of Congressmen at Jaipur. He said, ``This is a *duragraha* of the urchins of the Sangh.The Government will use all its might to crush this agitation. The Sangh will never be allowed to raise its head again." In a way, Pt. Nehru was right when he talked of 'urchins' conducting the *Satyagraha*, for its conduction was indeed in the hands of youngmen just in their twenties. No leader or no established political party stood behind them. Shri Guruji himself was quite young as compared to other well known leaders. But the imagination, discipline, spirit of sacrifice and patriotism these 'urchins' displayed were something extraordinary. The Government even applied brute force to suppress the movement. In Punjab and Madras States, inhuman atrocities were committed on the *Satyagrahis*. In places like Madras, Howrah, Agra, Jodhpur, Bareili, Buxar, Gwalior, the *Satyagrahis* were severely lathi-charged within the confines of closed prison cells and their heads and limbs broken, while in Punjab they were thrown into rivers and canals in freezing cold.

The Government had never imagined even in their dreams, that more than 70,000 *Satyagrahis* would have to be thrown behind the bars. It became virtually impossible for it to make arrangements for such a huge number. So at many places, the police adopted barbaric tactics to get over this difficulty. They would take the *Satyagrahis* miles away into a dense jungle and leave them there in the midnight in biting cold. Despite such atrocities, the Swayamsevaks suffered everything with matchless fortitude. At some places, they went on a hunger strike demanding just treatment. All in all, it was an exemplary *Satyagraha* beyond the imagination of Congressmen who swore day and night by Gandhiji.

The inhuman lathi-charges on peaceful *Satyagrahis* in Madras was strongly condemned by eminent men like Shri T. R. Venkatarama Shastri of the Liberal Party and Swami Venkatachalam, a member of Parliament. Later it was Shri Venkatarama Shastri who mediated for

getting the ban on the Sangh lifted. Public support and sympathy for the Sangh was on a sharp increase. At many places, *morchas* began to be taken out to demand justice for the Sangh and lifting of the ban.

There was no sign of the *Satyagraha* stopping and of the enthusiasm of the Swayamsevaks abating. Many prominent public spirited persons were naturally disturbed at the needless sufferings of such fine youngmen. Such leaders also began to think that some solution will have to be found out. They wrote to the Home Ministry expressing their willingness to mediate. In the beginning of January Shri G. V. Ketkar, Editor of the Pune-based daily 'Kesari', got permission to see Shri Guruji in Sivani jail. Accordingly, Shri Ketkar met Shri Guruji twice, on Jan. 12 and 16, acquainted him with the situation in the country, and suggested that if the *Satyagraha* was suspended it would pave the way for initiating some moves for getting the ban lifted.

Shri Guruji agreed and gave Shri Ketkar a written directive for suspending the *Satyagraha*. The directive was taken to those conducting the *Satyagraha* outside and finally, on Jan. 22, 1949, the suspension was formally announced. The saga of the countrywide *Satyagraha* that began on Dec. 9, 1948 now came to a remarkably successful conclusion.

In the meanwhile, many notable people had come to realise that all tall talk of easily crushing the Sangh by the Government was meaningless and that the Sangh's forbearance was not a sign of its weakness but of pristine patriotism. By putting Gandhiji's *Satyagraha* technique to use so successfully as to put even his followers to shame, the Sangh had scored a signal moral victory in the public eye. Nearly two lakh Swayamsevaks had offered *Satyagraha*, out of which 77,090 were arrested and sent to jail for different periods of time.

Naturally, a wave of sympathy for the Sangh swept throughout the country. This was also reflected in the media. On Jan. 22, 1949, The Tribune (Ambala), even while approving generally of the Government's line of thinking, remarked, "The RSS leader has paved the way for the eventual settlement by calling off the movement without any conditions. The next move lies with the Government who should withdraw the ban....." It also cautioned, "Let the Government remember that a policy of suppression will never succeed in killing an organisation."

`The Statesman' of Calcutta (22nd Jan. 1949) wrote in its editorial that the leaders of the RSS deserved to be praised for the manner in which they conducted the agitation, and opined that the ban on Sangh was causing the youth power to waste by clamping them behind bars. They are idealistic, physically fit, imbued with the spirit of sacrifice, and have the capacity to enhance the prestige of the country. "How far is it proper to keep such youth power in jail?", it asked.

Here it must be noted that the intention behind Shri Guruji giving a written consent to Shri Ketkar for suspending the *Satyagraha* was to see that there was no difficulty in the way of those who were desirous of acting as mediators. Such was his generosity of spirit that he did not hesitate to give up his previous insistence for immediate lifting of ban, just to show his respect for the well meaning efforts of eminent people. And the suspension of the *Satyagraha* did open the way for mediators.

After Shri Ketkar, Shri T. R. Venkatarama Shastri met Shri Guruji in jail twice in March 1949. In the first meeting it was decided that a written constitution for the RSS would be prepared expeditiously. The workers who were outside prepared a written draft of the unwritten system of work the Sangh had been following and handed it over to Shri Shastri. Shri Shastri took the document to Shri Guruji in jail and asked him to go through it and make necessary changes. Shri Guruji signed it without even glancing over it, which amazed Shri Shastri. He exclaimed that such complete faith of a leader in his followers was a shining example of his democratic spirit.

After the constitution was ready, Shri Guruji gave his permission in his second meeting with Sri Shastri to forward it to the Government. But the Government did not accept the constitution sent through a mediator. It insisted that Shri Guruji should himself send it. Because of delay in sending and receiving messages two months of April and May went by without any progress. Thinking that perhaps the Government did not like his mediation, Shri Shastri kept quiet for some time.

In the meanwhile, the Government again adopted delaying tactics by raising objections over the constitution. Shri Guruji became upset at the continued incarceration of thousands of Swayamsevaks owing

to Government's obduracy. He wrote a long letter to the Government answering all the so called objections raised by the Government about the constitution and squarely refuting all such imaginary charges against the organization. When the entire correspondence was sent to Shri Shastri he decided to come out with a public statement explaining to the people at large the entire situation and his role in the whole affair.

During the course of this correspondence, Shri Guruji was shifted from Sivani to the Betul jail. The jail at Sivani did not have even the elementary facilities fit for an eminent leader like Shri Guruji. Shri Ketkar gave an eyewitness account of the conditions existing in this jail, which exposed the Government's perverse mind. Only ten Rupees a month were spent on Shri Guruji. He was denied even legitimate amenities. The Betul jail was still worse. It was at Betul that Pt. Mauli Chandra Sharma and also Shri Guruji's parents came to meet him. The published reports of these meetings revealed many things like Shri Guruji's failing health, the treatment meted out to him and the Government's delaying tactics as well as its obdurate policy towards the Sangh. This led to sharp public reactions from several sympathisers of Sangh. However, Shri Guruji himself never worried himself over his personal comforts. Nor did he even care to know what rights a prisoner had, let alone demanding them. His only worry was about re-starting the patriotic work of the Sangh that had been unjustly obstructed. He was firm in his faith that there was no alternative to the Sangh's mission. The forbearance of Swayamsevaks had begun to give way to anger when they saw the Government sticking to its obstinacy despite justice and truth being on the side of the Sangh. Public workers and impartial newspapers began to openly speak and write in favour of the Sangh and against the unjust stand of the Government.

The Government was criticised even abroad. The 'World' of London criticised this assault on civil liberties and said that even during the British regime, which was so roundly condemned before, the citizens' freedom was not crushed as under Nehru's fascist rule. As a reaction to the Government's policy, proposals were made by some persons to launch a new mass movement against the ban on the Sangh. Sympathisers like A. D. Mani, Editor of Nagpur-based 'Hitavada', even

suggested that the Sangh should now come forward to work as a political party.

Fresh tension was building up and public sympathy for the Sangh was growing day after day. The Central Government too began to realise that public opinion was fast building up against it. Then all of a sudden, in the month of June, the Government made Shri Mauli Chandra Sharma meet Shri Guruji and get his written replies to some points. So Shri Sharma first met the Home Minister Patel, RSS Sarkaryawaha Shri Dani and Shri Balasaheb Deoras and then called on Shri Guruji in Betul jail where he again placed the Government's objections before Shri Guruji. However, Shri Guruji was not prepared to give any written clarifications to the Government. He had even decided not to engage himself in any more correspondence with the Government. On the other hand, because of growing public pressure the Government was now very much keen on resiling from its obstinate stand. It had realised that there was no other alternative to lifting of the ban and so was looking for an excuse to do so.

Real Reason for Lifting the Ban

After this meeting with Shri Mauli Chandra Sharma Sri Guruji wrote him a personal letter explaining once more the Sangh's stand apropos the Government's 'objections'. This letter, dated June 16, 1949, explained the Sangh's stand on eight points - the RSS and the Indian Constitution, the National Flag, charges of violence and secrecy against the Sangh, elections to the Sangh's Karyakari Mandal (Executive Council) Sangh's pledge, the question of Boy Swayamsevaks, appointment of the Sarsanghchalak, the "dominance" of a particular caste in the Sangh, and its system of keeping accounts. How strange that on the basis of this letter to a third person and not to the Government as such, the Government lifted the 18-month-old ban on the Sangh!

There was in fact a very important reason behind this haste. Shri Venkatarama Shastri had passed on a lengthy statement to the press with an embargo on its publication till July 13. This statement had clearly bared how the Government's policy was unjust and was against the fundamental rights of the citizens. Publication of such an indictment

by such a highly respected independent mediator would have been a matter of utter shame for the Government in the eyes of the people and so it was decided to lift the ban just a day before its intended publication. Still the 'Hindu' of Madras carried the entire statement on the 13th which fully exposed the Government.

Before giving out his final conclusion, Shri Shastri clarified on many of the so-called objections and charges about the Sangh referred to in the Government's correspondence with Shri Guruji. Minor objections regarding admission of minors into the Sangh and the Tricolour National Flag answered by Shri Guruji, were endorsed by Shri Shastriji. Referring to the head of the organisation to be chosen by his predecessor which was said to be undemocratic and fascist by the Government, Shri Shastri replied, 'A Government or a state can be characterised as fascist, but not a private association to which no one is compelled to belong. One may join it, or refuse to join it, or having joined it, may resign at will. There are many institutions in this country in which successors are appointed by the predecessors or in default of such nomination selected by the close associates and disciples of the Head, not elected by all the members of the institution. In the realm of spirit, election by the population is not quite in place."

As regards the charge of communalism, Shri Shastri noted, "The organisation admits Hindus of all sorts and denominations. Boys of all communities meet in its many activities without discrimination. The objects and nature of this association do not admit of non-Hindus being members. Living as I do in the midst of Communalism 'in excelsiss I cannot but feel that the R.S.S. was doing good work in trying to weld the much-divided Hindu Community. It may also be helpful in counteracting other evils growing under our very eyes and requiring the attention of the Government."

Referring to a press coment, evidently emanating from the Government, that "the constitution was right enough, but the leaders of this organisation cannot be trusted to function within its scope". Shri Shastri said, "It would be hard on any organisation to say that in anticipation of a not unlikely unlawful action on the part of its members, it is not allowed to begin work." Referring to another similar comment in the press that "though they profess to be a non-political

body they may turn into one overnight," he says, "And so they may. If they did, it would be no crime. But I am sure that these people know better than to commit such a mistake."

Further, Shri Shastri said, "In forming my judgment, I have taken into account the following facts - that they have worked for over twenty years under the predecessor Government openly and without any objection, that public men have associated themselves with their work and celebrations in more or less degree and openly, that even Government servants have taken part in their work without objection, that even our Government saw no reason for taking action till the assassination of Gandhiji, and the suspicion of their complicity in it and of their apprehended aim at other lives also. I take it that the suspicion has now been recognised to be without any real foundation. Those who could apply for the Statutory *Heabeas Corpus* have succeeded in invoking the aid of court: charges implicating the RSS in some cases have been found un-sustainable. I do feel that, if the ban is lifted and the organisation is allowed to work as it did for over two decades before the recent troubles arose, there is no reason to apprehend danger to the state or to public security.

"Finally now I must end with the expression of the hope that the Government will see their way to lift the ban and allow the RSS to work as they used to do of old. *The continuance of the ban and the detention of the chief men in jail is, in my opinion, neither just nor wise, nor expedient.*" *(emphasis ours)*

Probably there was yet one more reason for the lifting of the ban. On May 28, 1949, Shri Guruji had written a letter to Shri Balasaheb Deoras and tried to send it through a prisoner deputed as his attendant, but it had fallen into the hands of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. This letter gave the Government an indication that the Sangh was again planning to launch a mass movement. The first movement had already damaged the Government's public image so much that perhaps it recognised the foolishness of giving a chance for another movement that too involving the sympathetic public also.

In this letter Shri Guruji had written:

"I had told Shri Venkatarama Shastri in our very first meeting that

the Government would do exactly all these things, but he said 'Leave all that to me.' His confidence made me feel that perhaps he had some decisive talks with some prominent Government leaders. Hence, and even otherwise, I thought I should not become an impediment in the way of the efforts that this good man sympathising with us was making, and so I had given him my consent."

But I feel this problem will not be solved so long as another powerful movement is not launched. This does not mean that some thing should be done in haste. Firstly, there should be a plan to ensure that a movement can go on for a long time, and then it should be launched at an appropriate time. It would be very good if various mass strikes could also be organised simultaneously. A comprehensive statement should be issued explaining how a constitution was prepared in consultation with mediators like Shri Shastri and forwarded to the Government but the Government kept obstinately adopting the same old tactics. Arrangements should also be made for country-wide, massive distribution of this statement and it should be announced that there was no other way left for the Sangh for asserting the people's right of peaceful assembly, and that as the Government's obstinate stand had closed all other avenues we were again launching a peaceful agitation. Copies of this statement should be mailed to the Central and Provincial Governments and then a movement begun as before. This is what I feel necessary in the present context.

"Although this is my view, you may consult our prominent colleagues who are outside and decide whatever you think is proper and right. The chief point is that we should put an end to this Trisahnku - like situation of neither here nor there in spite of the best efforts of the mediators."

Here it must be borne in mind that Shri Guruji had accepted absolutely no conditions set by the Government while agreeing to submitting a written constitution or considering objections raised against any portions in it. Some people had made the false propaganda that the ban had been lifted only because of certain assurances that the Sangh had given to the Government. All such propaganda was exposed as false when the entire correspondence between Shri Guruji, the Government and the mediators was made public. The unwritten

constitution according to which the Sangh was functioning was put down in black and white and given and no other so called condition was accepted. It also became crystal clear that the Government had voluntarily and unconditionally withdrawn the ban.

'Right From the Horse's Mouth'

As it were 'right from the horse's mouth', the Government itself came out candidly with the truth in the Bombay Legislative Assembly of 14th Oct. 1949. In his replies to questions raised by Shri Lallubhai Patel (Surat Dist.) the Minister for Home and Revenue, said.

I) That the lifting of ban on RSS was unconditional, and

II) Its leader had given no undertaking to the Government.

It would be revealing to note at this juncture, that all this unfair, unjust tactics were being adopted by the Government even while it had become abundantly clear to it from their own investigations, that Sangh was not involved in any of those crimes foisted on its head. Even apart from the eye-opening fact of not a single Swayamsevak of Sangh was charge sheeted or much less prosecuted anywhere in the country on any of the much trumpetted charges against the Sangh, including the one of assassination of Gandhiji, the letter written by Sardar Patel to Pt. Nehru on Feb. 27th 1948 i.e., well within a month of the murder of Gandhiji is a damning evidence of the Government's dishonesty in the whole episode. Patel wrote: "I have kept myself almost in daily touch with the progress of the investigations regarding Bapu's assassination case. All the main accused have given long and detailed statements of their activities. It also clearly emerges from the statements that the RSS was not involved in it at all."

It is interesting to know that, even in those days of Sangh-Government confrontation, Sardar Patel was generous enough to thank Shri Guruji for the latters congratulations to him for the Hyderabad action. After offering thanks, Patel further wrote, "Our real task has now begun. We have to make up for the loss of centuries. We have no doubt that in this task, as in the actual operations, we shall have the goodwill and best wishes of friends like you."

The withdrawal of the ban on the RSS was broadcast by the all

India Radio on the evening of July 12 and Shri Guruji was released from Betul jail on July 13. When he arrived at the Nagpur railway station at noon more than 30,000 people gave him a tumultous welcome. Thousands of eyes became moist as they watched a father garlanding his own son who had successfully passed a fiery ordeal. After staying in Nagpur for 3-4 days Shri Guruji went to Madras to thank Shri T. R. Venkatarama Shastry personally. On the lifting of the ban Shri Shastri had sent a telegram to Nagpur saying "All is well that ends well." There was a flood of congratulatory telegrams and letters. After visiting Madras, Pune and Mumbai. Shri Guruji returned to Nagpur. He personally called upon those who had helped during the period of the ban and expressed his gratitude. This included G. V. Ketkar of Pune. Wherever Shri Guruji travelled the people gave him a spontaneous ovation. It was an overwhelming expression of their immense regard and affection for him.

10 ERA OF FELICITATIONS : UNERRING GUIDANCE

For eighteen long months of his internment, Shri Guruji had not been able to meet the Swayamsevaks who were so very near and dear to his heart. Public contacts also had been interrupted. The Swayamsevaks and the people too were intensely eager to see him and listen to his guidance in the wake of the lifting of ban. So a countrywide tour became very much necessary. Everybody wanted to know—what were the inferences to be drawn out of the ban on the Sangh? How was Shri Guruji going to react to the Congress Government's policy of oppression? What epithets was he going to use for the powers that be? All these questions were answered by Shri Guruji in his speeches, which turned out to be classic examples of his generosity of heart, complete absence of animus, pristine patriotism and expression of the highest Hindu cultural values. Lakhs listened to him and showered fulsome love and respect upon him.

Shri Guruji's all Bharat tour began in August 1949 and lasted till January 1950. Wherever he went he received spontaneous and tremendous ovations. Before leaving for Delhi on Aug. 20 on his tour of northern parts of Bharat, he visited Mumbai to call on Sardar Patel, as he had come to know that he was not keeping well. The meeting lasted for nearly an hour. Shri Bhaiyaji Dani, the then Sarkaryawaha of the Sangh, was also present on the occasion. During the talk, Sardar Patel referred to the increasing Christian missionary activities in the country and emphasised the need to augment the assimilative power of the Hindu society. He also briefly referred to the problems that had arisen after the creation of Pakistan and said, "We have to forget the past and look to the future of the country."

The unprecedented ovation Shri Guruji received during the five months of his itenerary is an inspiring story in itself, but for want of space it cannot be recounted here in full. Just as in the capitals of Rajasthan, Punjab, U.P., Andhra, Madras, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat etc., Delhi also witnessed a most impressive, memorable function. The overwhelming public response to the function at Delhi

on 23 Aug. 1949, naturally attracted world-wide attention. As an example, the BBC report on his welcome in the capital should suffice. It observed, "Shri Guruji is a shining star that has arisen on the Indian firmament. The only other Indian who can draw such huge crowds is Pt. Nehru." Indian press too flashed the highlights of the function with prominance. Here is its discription, in a nut shell:

"The crowd overflowed the railway station and spread so far that it looked as if the whole capital had turned up to greet Shri Guruji. The whole city reverberated with shouts of 'Shri Guruji ki Jai' and was decorated and welcome arches put up at many places. The public reception accorded to Shri Guruji in the evening at Ramlila grounds was attended by over five lakh citizens. All roads seemed to lead to Ramlila ground. The stage was imposing and the whole function was conducted in an exemplary manner. Uniformed Swayamsevaks were calmly and efficiently conducting people to their seats. No police assistance was needed. In the public meeting Shri Guruji was presented with a scroll of honour on behalf of the citizens of Delhi, and he addressed the public in reply to the felicitation."

From place to place Shri Guruji was given a similar grand reception. History may have but few examples of crores of people giving a leader such a rousing reception wherever he went. And what he said at every such place bore ample evidence of his large-heartedness and spirit of harmony. Despite the hardships and the insults that he and lakhs of Swayamsevaks had to suffer for eighteen long months he did not utter a single word of bitterness nor did he exploit these occasions for propaganda purposes.

Reaching Himalayan heights of greatness and forbearance he said, "Let us close this chapter of the ban on the Sangh. Do not let your minds be overcome with bitterness for those who, you feel, have done injustice to you. If the teeth were to bite the tongue do we pull out the teeth? Even those who have done injustice to us are our own people. So we must forget and forgive. Just as a man who wakes up from sleep works with renewed vigour, we too must devote ourselves with renewed energy to the same task to which we have dedicated ourselves - the task of putting an end to separatism, narrow-mindedness and such other divisive factors."

Such was the constant refrain of his speeches everywhere. At the same time, he outlined in clearest terms the work the Sangh had to do in the prevailing serious situation. While referring to the hardships the Swayamsevaks had to bear at the hands of our own people Shri Guruji would say, "Had these blows been struck by some foreigners they would have certainly been made to face the brunt of the Sangh's might." Again and again he stated the basic ideology of the Sangh, that if the society and the nation had to be transformed in a healthy manner, there was no other way than getting organised on the basis of the cultural values of Bharat and drew the people's attention to the vibrant spiritual core of Bharat. His words made it amply clear that he did not look upon all the felicitation and honour accorded to him were for an individual named Golwalkar. Such a thought never crossed his mind.

An incident during Shri Guruji's visit to Sonepat in his tour of Punjab is worth recalling. Carried away by emotion a Swayamsevak raised slogans like 'Long live Guruji', "Long live Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh". Shri Guruji stopped him and expressing his displeasure, he said, "Such slogans should not be raised for any individual or any organisation. For, no individual is immortal, nor is any organisation. Only the nation is forever a living entity. So the only slogan can be *Bharat Mata ki Jai*." The very idea of his being honoured for his personal sake was sheer anathema to him.

The Sangh had always kept itself aloof from publicity, but this aloofness was misconstrued by some interested elements. Added to this was a common misunderstanding that whatever was not publicity - oriented must be secretive. So in his speeches in Delhi and elsewhere, Shri Guruji explained to the people the cultural basis of this aloofness from publicity. Further, he told the people that their presence in such large numbers was an index of their love for Sangh and the greatness of its Cause. So now this love should be transformed into active support with the firm faith that the Sangh work alone would change the face of the country. Shri Guruji also took these opportunities to put the ideology of the Sangh in the changing context in order to answer a new doubt in the mind of the people.

Uncompromising Nationalism

Even when he was in jail he had been asked, "Now that the

Muslims have been given a piece of the country for their own, the basic reason for Hindu - Muslim conflict is no more, so what is the need of the Sangh now?" This question, though misplaced, was used by Shri Guruji to explain the real motivation behind the founding of Sangh. Since those times to date many so-called intellectuals continue to labour under the wrong impression that the Sangh is a Muslim-hater or opposed to Muslims. Some other well meaning people also look upon the Sangh as an organisation intended to counter terror tactics of Muslims.

Once Shri Guruji Said, "Even if Mohammed Paigamber or Jesus Christ had not been born and if the Hindu society had been in the same disorganised state as it is found today, we would have undertaken the same work of organising the Hindus as we are doing now." Even during the turbulent and tension-ridden post-partition days, Shri Guruji had expressed very balanced similar views on this question. They are so clear and fundamental as to merit a little elaboration. He said:

"I have clearly told those who put me this question that their thinking is thoroughly fallacious. In the first place the Sangh did not come into being for fighting somebody or for preventing somebody from fighting. As for setting up a force to face a physical assault there are gymnasiums and *vyayamshalas* for the purpose. Even they can do the job. It is not necessary to set up such a big nation-wide organisation for such a trifling purpose. Is this the only ill that our society is suffering from? If you think calmly you will realise that from the very beginning the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has accepted the responsibility of building national character in our people. This work has in fact no end. It has to go on generation after generations. Character is as much needed for future generations as for the present one. Every citizen of Bharat must always be seen working for the country. Hence the work of the Sangh is independent of the ups and downs of circumstances. Taking lathis in hand and moving about like goondas or inciting communal riots is definitely not the work of the Sangh.

"World peace is in fact our ultimate goal. In fact, it has been our nation's life mission, and we have to fulfil it. To give lessons in peace to the world on a spiritual level and to create a sense of oneness in

the whole of humanity has been our real national mission since ages. But when will all this become possible? Only when we succeed in bringing together crores of our own people and imbuing them with our sublime cultural values and sterling character and motivating them for the achievement of that mission."

In accordance with the changing context, Shri Guruji had to say many things on many matters - such as the end of the British regime, the tragic partition of the country, the critical situation prevailing in the country just within three years of independence, and the stand of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in the new context. He had to explain things not only to the Swayamsevaks but also to the people at large. It was a sort of public dialogue in the form of the speeches he made during his all-Bharat tour. Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, the country-wide reaction to this tragedy, the Government's unjust attitude towards the Sangh, the ever increasing absence of idealism everywhere, and the consequent barriers to the progress of the nation - all these things had caused great agony in his mind. As such he had no interest whatever in the ceremonial felicitations accorded to him. He only used these occasions to place before the people the basic concept of pure and intense patriotism. His speeches reflected his firm faith that it was only through the path of the Sangh that the nation could overcome the prevailing challenges and attain heights of glory.

During his stay in Delhi, while touring the northern parts of Bharat, Shri Guruji met Prime Minister Nehru on 30th August. This was the first time the two met after the lifting of the ban. After this, Shri Guruji met Nehru twice on September 23 and November 29. Both the meetings lasted for quite a long time. The two leaders exchanged their views on the situation in the country. Shri Guruji also expressed his views quite candidly on subjects like culture and nationalism, the place of non-Hindus in the national mainstream, the form and objective of Sangh work, religious tolerance, non-violence etc., and answered Pt. Nehru's doubts and queries. Unfortunately however, despite these meetings Pt. Nehru remained prejudiced against the Sangh and continued to denounce it as fascist and communal. In later times no opportunity for such a meeting arose since Nehru himself did not want it.

At this juncture, an important event took place which underlined Nehru's opposition to the Sangh, and which came to have an enduring impact on the relationship between the Sangh and the Congress. In accordance with Sardar Patel's wishes some Congress leaders had started moves towards opening the doors of the Congress for the Sangh Swayamsevaks. On this point the Congress was divided into two camps. Rajarshi Tandon and D. P. Mishra openly advocated the idea. O. P. Thakur of Gujarat even wrote an article strongly supporting it. He wrote, if the disciplined Sangh Swayamsevaks entered, it would cleanse the Congress.

During the days of this debate Pt. Nehru was on a foreign tour. On his return however, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution which stipulated that the Swayamsevaks of the Sangh may join the Congress if they so wish, but after joining the Congress they cannot take part in any voluntary organisation except the Congress Seva Dal. The meaning of this resolution, passed in Nehru's presence, was clear as daylight. It was that though the Sangh's constitution might have given the Swayamsevaks the freedom to join any political party, but the Congress insisted that if they wanted to join the Congress they would have to give up their Sangh's connections. Thus the doors of the Congress were closed for the Sangh.

Supremely Serene as Ever

Some Sangh-haters did try to create disturbances during this era of felicitations. At places like Miraj, Sangli, Kolhapur etc., rowdies resorted to stone-throwing and even made attempts to physically assault Shri Guruji. As soon as he reached. Kolhapur a very serious situation arose. Opponents of the Sangh raised slogans against him, burnt his effigies and tried to trap him in the midst of a hostile crowd. But Shri Guruji did not lose even a bit of his serenity and calmly carried out all the scheduled programmes. He also went for the *darshan* of Mahalakshmi, the chief Goddess of the town. From Kolhapur he was to go to Sangli. The Government officials took him to the limits of the city in a vehicle secured with an iron mesh. This vehicle was also pelted, with sufficiently big stones.

From Kolhapur to Sangli Shri Guruji travelled in the car of Shri

Bhalji Pendharkar, the celebrated cinema director and producer. As usual, he sat by the side of the driver. Shri Babarao Bhide the Prant Pracharak, sat in the back seat. At a certain point, a road from Miraj meets the Kolhapur - Sangli road. Here some Swayamsevaks had come on bicycles to inform the travelling party that a large hostile crowd was hiding in a field near Sangli with the intention of stopping Shri Guruji's car and attacking him. The Swayamsevaks suggested that Shri Guruji should not sit in the front seat and his car should follow a bus full of Swayamsevaks. But Shri Guruji rejected the idea and said, "No, the car will lead. Don't worry. Nothing will happen." When the rowdies saw the car approaching they started coming out of their hiding places and on to the road. But Babarao had already instructed the driver to drive fast and not to stop under any circumstances. The hostile crowd had imagined that when the car saw so many people on the way it would slow down and would be forced to come to a halt. But when Babarao saw the crowd he again ordered the driver to drive fast and not to stop, come what may. So the driver accelerated still more and the car sped ahead. When the people on the road saw the car going full speed they jumped aside to save themselves and the car safely went through before the attackers could do anything. All this time everyone in the party was naturally quite tense, but Shri Guruji remained the very picture of calmness and serenity.

In Sangli, all necessary preparations had been made for Shri Guruji's security. The workers there heaved a sign of relief when they saw him arrive safe and sound. In Sangli too there were some incidents of stone-throwing and slogan-shouting, but all programmes were carried out as planned before. In his public speech Shri Guruji did not make even a single reference to the tense situation or to the acts of rowdyism, nor was there the slightest sign of worry on his face. With impressive serenity he expounded the Sangh's constructive thinking just as at other places.

Not that the incidents at Kolhapur - Sangli did not sadden him, but he did not lose his balance. Neither was there any anger in his heart, nor did he blame anybody for these incidents. Writing later about these incidents in the *Purushartha* magazine he said, ``These are our own people whom we have to serve. They may offer a garland of flowers

or a garland of shoes. They may shower on us praise or abuse. Whatever they do they are after all our own people, our own society. The society may behave nicely or rudely towards us, but that is just a test for us. Some day they will be with us. They will even accept to follow us because of our absolute devotion. The society is an embodiment of God Almighty, and God has said He is the slave of his devotees. So the need is for us to prove ourselves to be real devotees."

Unwavering Eye on the Goal

Shri Guruji's constant endeavour was to turn the religiously-oriented Hindus in the direction of fulfilling their social duty as well. For this, he presented the model of his own dedicated life. Neither in the triumphant felicitation era nor during the adverse period of the ban did he ever lose his usual balance and equanimity. He used every opportunity and every medium to draw the attention of the Swayamsevaks and the society away from the fleeting issues and towards the positive and eternal mission of the Sangh.

Even as the felicitations were in full swing Shri Guruji realised the need for again rejuvenating the efficient system of the daily Shakha for the regular inculcation of the right *samskars*. Many had come to entertain quite a few doubts. They had to be infused with new faith in the ideology as well as the methodology of the Sangh. So during his stay in Nagpur in October 1949, he placed the fundamental thoughts of Sangh before the workers for five consecutive days from the 18th to the 22nd. Explaining the purpose of these sessions Shri Guruji said, "Many of us may doubt if, in view of the changed situation in the country, it is necessary to continue with the old system of work. We must seriously ponder over these aspects." In this five-day series of talks, Shri Guruji tried to clear all such doubts in the minds of the Swayamsevaks and workers and finally convinced them that there was no alternative to Sangh work.

After this guidance to workers of Nagpur, Shri Guruji went on a tour of northern parts of Bharat where many *pracharak* camps were held, where also he frankly spoke on such issues. Some workers voiced their opinion quite frankly and said, "The impediment that came in our way was the one put by the powers that be and that was procured

through politics. So why should we also not achieve that power through politics and remove the obstruction for the progress of our work? Having put up such streneous efforts for so long why should we now keep ourselves away from politics? In fact, there is no one who can make use of power as we can for the good of the people."

In these discourses, Shri Guruji tried to explain the serious limitations of politics and political power. He said, "Politics is but a very small segment of national life. It can never cover its entire gamut. Some people think, '*Yatha raja tatha praja*', so power of *raja* is necessary to influence the people's mind. But now we are in an age of democracy. Now the position is '*Yatha praja tatha raja*'. Hence if the people are weak, the ruler too will be weak. If the people are timid, without self-confidence, without character, the ruler too would be likewise. Hence the truth is that political power should be guided by the people and not the other way around."

Emphasising the need for organising the Hindus from one end of the country to the other, Shri Guruji stated that our society is still in the grip of castiest and provincial differences, disorganised and weak and suffers from an amnesia of identity. It has also become greedy of material objects of enjoyment. So long as our people are not devoted to the nation as a whole and imbued with sterling character how can even democracy succeed?

He also said, "Politics can never hope to build a nation of patriotic people. It is culture that moulds a nation on right lines. Our task of promoting chaste nationalism, dispelling delusions about it and rejuvenating the society and the nation on the basis of such nationalism-well, this is what we mean by cultural *samskaras*."

Commenting on the character of post-independence politics, Shri Guruji said, "All such organisations are inciting differences to serve their own selfish ends. Even those who claim to be all-Bharat leaders have not been able to rise above such divisive tendencies."

"How can the nation be uplifted so long as it lacks personal and national character," he asked. Holding power-centered party politics responsible for the moral decline of the nation, he said, "We do not see character as a rule mainly because the leaders think only from the party angle in all political or economic matters. They accord greater

importance to the party and want to promote it at all costs. They keep on trying to build up their party, without caring for what is good or bad for the country. They take part in the elections not for the good the country but for just achieving power, nothing more. Today no field of life presents a living picture of an integrated national life encompassing the entire stretch of our motherland right from the Himalayas to the tip of Kanyakumari. Even the sense of service to society is mired in party squabbles. Party benefit and, more so, personal aggrandisement, have become all in all. Once you form a party on such a basis it becomes impossible to rise above partisan ends."

Stating that the organised life of our society infused with character was the top priority of Sangh, Shri Guruji said with emphasis, "The spirit of oneness which means one's identification with the joys and sorrows of the society is the very basis of national character. We consider it as the soul of the nation and desire to awaken its wholesome *samskaras* among the people. This does not require power; on the contrary, history stands testimony to the fact that unity brought about by power is soon dissipated. Infusing of the people with all the desirable noble *samskaras* cannot be achieved through power.

"Had our life depended upon mere political power we would have been finished the moment foreigners committed aggression on us. We will live so long as we keep this cultural stream full and flowing. If the people have firm faith in our culture who can ever rule over us? Hence the primary task is to unite the entire society on that enduring and life-giving basis."

This was indeed the beginning of an onerous task which Shri Guruji had very thoughfully launched after the ban - the task of a three-fold presentation of the ideology of the Sangh and reawakening the spirit of undiluted dedication to its work. This task will be dealt with in detail at later stage. It would suffice here to say that the concept of national idealism which Shri Guruji very emphatically propounded in those days which has nurturred the Sangh to grow into the luxuriant banyan tree of today.

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11 BEACON OF HOPE FOR SUFFERERS

Three years had passed since the partition when the first half of 1950 dawned. During those three years, the scenes Shri Guruji witnessed during his four of West Bengal had deeply hurt him. His heart bled seeing the pitiable plight of his fellow countrymen.

Most unfortunately, our Bharatiya leaders had given not an iota of thought to the future of Hindus while agreeing to the creation of pakistan. They depended upon the nebulous optimism that what had happened previously would never happen again. However, their day-dreaming soon came to an abrupt and heart rending end.

In East Pakistan one and a half crore of Hindus had been left behind. They too just as in western pakistan were subjected to inhuman atrocities and suffering. Their life became such a terrible ordeal that lakhs of them, uprooted from their hearths and homes, flooded into west Bengal.

Invoking People's Support

In the eyes of the Central Government they had overnight become aliens, foreign refugees. In Pakistan, they had only two alternatives - either conversion to Islam or death. But they had decided to live as Hindus and so had somehow managed to reach here. What was amazing was that our Government neither tried to provide them security nor think of exchange of population. Without giving even an inkling of what was in store for them, with just a stroke of the pen they were deprived of their homeland over night and rendered aliens. Our leaders cared not a bit for their life, property or honour. Only the Government could have tackled this tremendous problem. But Shri Guruji did not want to merely depend upon the Government. He said, it was the responsibility of the society as well, and so appealed to the people to voluntarily come forward and do their utmost for their uprooted brethren.

In order to mobilise and organise the people's support the *Vastuhara Sahayata Samiti* was set up under the auspices of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. From Calcutta Sri Guruji reached Delhi, where he issued an appeal to the nation describing the plight of Hindus in

East Pakistan and urging the people to come forward to help generously for their releif work. The *Vastuhara Sahayata Samiti* had already been set up on February 8.

In West Bengal, Assam and Orissa the work of the Sangh was on a very limited scale. On the other hand, the problem was enormous and of national dimensions, calling for governmental measures. Shri Guruji therefore urged the Government to give up indecision and take decisive steps without any further delay. In the course of his statement, he said :

"If indecision, confused mindset and weakness of mind continues the Government of Bharat will be committing the grave sin of putting out the lives of crores of their innocent fellow-countrymen. Its reputation will bite the dust. So the need is to act fearlessly, without getting mired in a senseless discussion of communalism etc. and do the needful, whether it is police action or exchange of Hindus and Muslims. A plan for a proportional exchange of Hindus and Muslims left over in Bharat should be put into action immediately, so that our one and a half crore brethren could be saved and could be made to lead a life of peace, honour and happiness.

"At the same time, I appeal to all my patriotic countrymen to express their anguish in a controlled manner, and avoid activities that may disturb peace and create hindrances in the way of the Government. We must beware of indulging in any anti-social, anti-national and undesirable actions."

He also said, "It does not become of us to sit back, saying it is the responsibility of the Government. The people must also do everything possible in their hands to lighten the Government's burden."

The statement was prominently flashed in newspapers also. After this Shri Guruji returned to Nagpur and issued a similar statement on March 14. In this he again urged the people to extend a helping hand to their uprooted fellow-countrymen. The statement also highlighted in detail the gravity of the problem.

Shri Guruji never approved of interfering with Government's work. He always advocated co-operation, whether it was the question of the refugees or of the ban on the Sangh, or natural calamities or foreign aggression. He never resorted to opposing the Government merely for the sake of opposition. His guidance always rested on the principles of patriotism, the people's good and national harmony and unity.

The horrible tales carried by refugees from East Pakistan were indeed heart rending. But still Shri Guruji did not lose his balance or his control over his emotions. He always stressed that we must practice restraint and adopt a constructive approach while seeking solutions even to such emotive problems.

In Eastern Bharat, the Sangh was not that strong. Still the Swayamsevaks presented themselves as unique models of selfless service. In response to Shri Guruji's appeal funds, clothing, foodgrains and daily needs began to flow to the *Vastuhara Samiti* from all over the country. The orgy of atrocities in East Pakistan continued for full one year and the refugee influx into West Bengal kept on rising. In order to provide them all-round relief the *Vastuhara Samiti* found itself engaged in multifarious activities, towards that end; such as conducting relief camps, providing them with their daily needs like food, clothing, utensils etc. arranging medical treatment for the ailing, finding job opportunities for earning their livelihood and conducting schools for children. The camps set up in west Bengal provided shelter to about 80 thousand refugees, clothes were distributed to one and a half lakh people, and foodgrains and milk to more than one lakh people. Five thousand Sangh workers worked all day and night on this purpose.

One noteworthy gain during this period was that after the ban on the Sangh was lifted, Home Minister Sardar Patel often used to discuss the situation in the country with Shri Guruji. Whenever a major development took place Shri Guruji would acquaint Sardar Patel with his views and the stand of the Sangh.

When the refugee influx from East Pakistan became a burning problem severe reactions to it were heard from all over the country. In his letter to Sardar Patel on April 5, Shri Guruji wrote, "We are aware that it would be highly improper to exploit the situation which would endanger peace or incite feelings against the Government. We believe in maintaining peace, and it is with this attitude that we are serving the sufferers."

On reaching Delhi on 1950, April 22, Shri Guruji met Sardar Patel and personally acquainted him with the relief operations of the *Sahayata Samiti.* Patel was greatly pleased and suggested that the Sangh work should expand more rapidly in such eastern parts.

Earthquake in Assam

Even while the Sangh workers were busy with the work of Samiti, nature had another test in store for them. On August 15, there was a terrific earthquake in Assam. Which changed the very course of the Brahmaputra. Thousands of houses were washed away, 10 to 15 feet wide cracks appeared in the ground, bridges on the river stood demolished and property worth hundreds of crores of rupees destroyed.

Again, the workers of the Sangh plunged into the rescue work. At Guwahati an 'Earthquake Sufferers Relief Committee' was formed, with Justice Kamakhyaram Barua as its Chairman. Shri Guruji wrote a letter motivating the Swayamsevaks to do their best in the service of the victims of the catostrophe. In September he also visited Assam to review the work of the committee and gave the Assamea brothern the message of self-help. He was against the attitude of merely depending upon the government or on help from outside every time there was a calamity. At the same time he was also against working as a separate group. He wanted the Swayamsevaks to mix with the society and work along with the people.

Shri Guruji expressed hearty appreciation of the work done by the relief committee. He had a word of special praise for those Swayamsevaks who swam to people marooned in the floods and helped them out to safer places. He was greatly impressed with the courage and dedication with which the Swayamsevaks worked even at the risk of their lives, and the discipline they displayed in organising various types of relief work.

Under Diverse Circumstances

1950 was about to end. On Dec.15, Sardar Patel passed away. When the news came an important meeting of the *Kendriya Karyakari Mandal* of the Sangh was in progress in Nagpur. Workers knew about the deep regard Sardar Patel had for the Sangh. The meeting was adjourned after passing a resolution of condolence. Then Shri Guruji flew to Mumbai in the company of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Shri Ravi Shankar Shukla, and placed a wreathe on Patel's mortal remains on behalf of the Sangh. In his message of condolence he wrote:

"Shri Vallabhbhai Patel's demise is verily an unbearable loss for the country. He had great affection for our work. It is our duty to rescue

the country from internal strife and external aggression by making it strong and invincible. Such a pledge alone would be our true homage to him."

For a year and a half after Shri Guruji's release from prison nothing worth reporting happened. There would be felicitations at different places, but at times there would also pelting of stones. But Shri Guruji remained calm as ever. He accepted both the bouquets and the brickbats with equal poise. He kept himself busy with the various aspects of Sangh work - providing relief to victims of natural calamities, spreading the Sangh network and providing ideological inspiration and organisational guidance to workers. All these had a single thread running through every one of them - the realisation of the ideal of a resurgent Hindu Nation, based on our cultural ideals and seated on the peaks of glory effulgent with purity of character, and heights of spiritual attainment.

Formation of Bharatiya Jana Sangh

As the elections approached the atmosphere in the country hotted up all the more. With the advent of independence, politics had become the be-all and end-all of public life. Even within the Sangh circle there was a conflict of ideas. From outside as well as from inside Shri Guruji came under pressure from those who held that the Sangh should play a positive role in politics also. During the ban period, Sardar Patel had himself urged upon this, but Shri Guruji had remained firm in his stand. After the ban was lifted many Sangh workers were also thinking whether it was possible to keep away from politics? As stated in the previous chapters, Shri Guruji had answered such questions very logically and stressed the need for a selfless cultural organisation that would keep itself away from party and power politics.

But political power was fast becoming a determining factor in life. Within the Congress and also in the Government the hiatus in the thinking of pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel was widening. In the indirect tussle for Congress presidentship between the two Patel supported Purushottam Das Tandon defeated Nehru supported Acharya Kripalani. Prior to this, barbaric atrocities on Hindus in East Pakistan had led to West Bengal being flooded with them and the differences between Nehru and Patel had come to a sharp focus. Patel was in favour of

demanding territory from Pakistan for the resettlement of these displaced Hindus . On the other hand, Nehru signed a very humiliating treaty with the Pakistani Prime Minister Liakat Ali on April 8, 1950. As a protest against this, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji and K.C. Niyogi resigned from the Cabinet. As both of them were supporters of Patel's policies their quitting the Government somewhat weakened Patel's position in the Government. But his hold on the Congress party was yet strong as ever. Another show of strength came during the Congress President's election. But Sardar's health was rapidly declining, and on Dec. 15, 1950 he passed away. Now Nehru had an unchallenged hold on both, the party and the Government. Nehru's obstinate stance forced Tandon to resign his Congress presidentship and Nehru became both the Prime Minister and the Congress President. Many supporters of Patel like Dwarka Prasad Mishra openly rose in revolt, but to no avail.

Because of this rapid series of events, a section of Sangh workers as well as other nationalistic elements began to strongly feel the need for a nationalistic political party. This turmoil led to some Sangh workers of Jalandhar in Punjab setting up Bharatiya Jana Sangh. About the same time, Dr. Shyma Prasad Mukherji also started a branch of the Jana Sangh in Bengal. He met Shri Guruji repeatedly to urge that the Sangh should extend its full co-operation to the new political party. Shri Guruji remained firm as ever that the Sangh should not plunge into politics. He nevertheless did not think it proper to suppress the workers' desire to participate in politics. So, he while keeping the organisation fully aloof from politics he gave the workers the freedom to enter the political field. Once Shri Guruji gave his permission, a network of Jana Sangh branches came up in many provinces in September-October, 1951. On Oct. 12, 1951, the party held its first all Bharat convention in Delhi, and entered the electoral fray with its own manifesto.

Away From the Din of Elections

But Shri Guruji had no interest at all in all the din and dust of election propaganda. On the contrary, hurling of charges and countercharges by those in politics disturbed him deeply. So to be away from its maddening atmosphere, he went for a stay at Sinhagarh, a fort of Shivaji's times near Pune. Here he stayed for 25 days from Dec. 25, 1951 to Jan. 18, 1952 in Lokmanya Tilak's residence.

Shri Guruji utilized this period in the reading of the Gita, the Upanishads and other fundamental spiritual works and in meditation. He would sit with his companions, read a chapter from the Gita and then discuss its many fold import.

He also went for walks on the fort to be in tune with Nature. He would sit on an elevated spot in the *Padmasana* posture at sunrise and at sunset and commune with the Infinite. On such occasions, his countenance would light up with a golden radiance and it appeared as if some inner bliss was shining on his serene face.

On the *Makar Sankranti* day, Shri Guruji invited people living on the fort to his place, distributed laddoos among them and inquired after their welfare.

Although Shri Guruji stayed away from the din and bustle of elections the question remained - what will be the Sangh's role in electoral politics? Those Sangh Swayamsevaks who were of voting age could not keep away from elections. Neither did the Sangh expect that. So in this direction the Sarkaryawaha of Sangh, Shri Bhaiyaji Dani, issued guidelines: "Swayamsevaks of the Sangh have been brought up in an atmosphere of chaste national *samskaras*. So during elections, they must keep away from narrow-minded and sectarian conflicts. They must also not help in any way people who indulge in hatemongering. Selfless patriotism is the touchstone of the Sangh. So they should vote only for that party which works for the good of the country as a whole."

Once the elections were over, Shri Guruji again started on his all-Bharat tour for spreading the Sangh work and with it the message of unity and harmony among the people. While leaving Sinhagarha he had thought out the lines on which the Sangh was to march ahead in the coming days.

In the light of Election Results

A number of Jana Sangh workers were feeling thoroughly despondent because of their utter rout-in the face of their high expectations in the 1952 general elections. Some of them had also conveyed their feelings to Shri Guruji through letters. The timely guidence Shri Guruji gave to all such workers is amply reflected in his reply to one such worker, which is given below:

"Those who have lost must take the results not only sportingly but in the true spirit of our culture of doing one's work without attachment and with equanimity in victory and defeat. Those who have won have a right to be happy but not inflated, and those who have lost may naturally feel sorry but need not be crestfallen or despondent. After all, it has been, as it always should be, a game between parties belonging to one body-politic and must be played in a throughly friendly and brotherly spirit.

"During the campaigning it is not unnatural that much acrimony and bitterness is let loose. But I feel that all these undesirable feelings should be completely washed away and the correct understanding that we are all children of our Motherland and of our nation, should be assiduously cultivated and all, irrespective of party affiliations, should determine to work in co-operation for the good of all our people. Properly seen, it will be found that the area of agreement is extensive and of differeces negligible.

"With this attitude our democratic system will survive any onslaughts by elements desirous of wrecking it and bringing about chaos in the country."

How To Vote?

Further on, prior to the 1957 elections, Shri Guruji had given certain clear-cut guidelines by way of an article, to the people as to how to exercise their electoral right in the elections.

"Shortly the people will go to the polls to elect representatives to the Lok Sabha and the various Vidhana Sabhas and entrust the government of the country to them for the coming five-year period. Five years is quite a long period in which much good or harm can be done to the people depending upon the nature of the representatives. There is no provision in the Constitution for recalling representatives who might fail to answer to the electorate or who might go back upon the promises lavished upon the people at the time of the elections. Such failure or, at times, willfull flouting of the people's wishes is not rare. And in spite of such lapses, the electorate have no machinery to recall them despite their disapproval of their elected representatives' opinions and doings.

Effect of No Recall

"With this knowledge, that once they are elected they are secure in their comfortable, each candidate and the party setting him up, are sure to indulge in extravagant promises and conjure up before the ill-informed and under-educated voters a veritable paradise provided they are elected and given the chance to bring their heaven on earth. Everything is fair, it is said, in love and war, and elections are fought as 'war' against all other parties and candidates, and so promises made during electioneering propaganda are considered to be deserving of being fulfilled only in their breach. No one seems to see anything immoral in it; and so candidates are sure to vie with one another in weaving a web of lies to catch the voters in their meshes. The person or party with the greatest genius for this campaign of lies is likely to pool the greatest number of votes and seize power to use it as they choose, in total disregard of what they had promised to the people. There may be a few exceptions but considering past experience they are likely to be just a little oasis in the desert and, may-be, they will have but a slender chance to be elected.

"Heavy is the responsibility of the voter, therefore. For it is in his hands now to seal the fate of the country for five long years. For once he has cast his lot with one or the other group he has no means of remedying his error or judgment and preventing any harm that may overtake him. So the voter has now to bring all his strong commonsense to bear upon this problem of extreme moment and make the correct choice.

The Two Half-Truths

"Leading persons are busy advising the voter. Two main theories have been forthcoming. They are old theories - as old as the democratic system of general elections to the legislatures. Nothing new about them- only a fresh reiteration. One has come - so the newspaper reports - from no less a person than Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru calling upon the people to ignore the person the character and qualities of the individual candidates and pay attention only to the party - in this case the Congress - and cast their votes for the party. The other view - advocated recently by Sri C. Rajagopalachari - is to ignore the party and examine the individual candidate and study his character, for he rightly says that it is the character of the representative of the people which in the

last analysis is of utmost importance in the conduct of State business within and without legislatures. "Both these views are partially correct. For, a party without persons of good character and selfless devotion to the total national cause is like a body with paralysed limbs useless and even harmful, for all its tall claims, platitudes and professions; and persons of good individual character, jostled together without a common aim, common programme, and common affiliations, and consequently not bound together into organised homogeneous party, are like parts of various machines jumbled together, each good and perfect within itself but unfit for co-ordinated action, incapable of any achievement. Both these views, therefore, have to be taken together and a good party with candidates of character and devotion to the national cause, free from all self-seeking, of ability and capable of co-ordinated action, and imbued with coherent national views, has to be chosen by the electorate. Unless this discrimination is exercised there is likely to be much cause for repentance.

"What then is the voter to do? Which party should he choose? Which type of candidate should he favour?

Reject Totalitarianism Under Any Garb

"Of the major parties in the field, some have kept the ideal of 'socialism' before them. However, socialism has resulted in Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy and the history of their rise and fall with all that the world has had to suffer from totalitarian dictatorship is too will known. There is no guarantee that the same sad tale will not be repeated in our country. Every citizen must guard with jealous care his prized freedom and not allow his dignity as an individual to be subordinated to dictatorial tyranny, nor should he allow himself to be subjugated and converted into a bonded slave purchased for a mere pittance. He should, therefore, steer clear of all so-called socialistic ideals and, with firm determination, turn his back upon all who like to indulge in those unsocial doctrines.

"The communists are wedded to the Russian group and dream of establishing the Russian system in our country. What that system is can be imagined from the recent events in Hungary. The last 40 years of their existence have witnessed such blood-baths, such mass massacres as have no parallel even in the darkest and least civilized periods of

human history. And the enslavement of the average human being, the regimentation of ideas, thoughts and sentiments, the total suppression of all freedoms resulting in degrading the human being into a mere lifeless tool are frightful effects of this queer ideology. This is wholly repugnant to the age-old heritage of our people. Indeed there is little to choose between communism and socialism, both being perverse offsprings of the same reactionary process of thought seeking to concentrate all power of the state and of wealth, and of the means of production thereof, in the hands of a few, spreading the tentacles of iron control on all aspects of life, thus making of individual human being a lifeless, joyless existence.

Chips of the Same Anti-Hindu Block

"In addition, all these parties pride themselves on being non-Hindu. The various laws interfering with the Hindu way of life and striking at the very roots of our existence as a homogeneous people with a distinctive Dharma and culture, the disinclination to respect the Hindu sentiments in relation to the cow, and their partial treatment of Muslims, their pro-Muslim communal outlook in reservation of seats out of their candidates by the Congress, the encouragement of Muslim agitations-well, all these reveal the un-Hindu character and ideology of such parties in all its ugliness. The Hindu people, their Dharma, Samskriti and all they cherish and hold in reverence stand in danger of being wholly obliterated if the reins of power are entrusted in the hands of such un-Hindu-often anti-Hindu - elements. Some really good individuals may stand as candidates under their labels. If the voter is guided merely by such goodness he is sure to find that the candidate when returned will be bound by the bogey of party discipline and has goodness and his regard for the Hindu ideals will be of no avail and he will allow himself to be carried away by the crushing party machine.

For a Right Choice

I address myself to the great Hindu people, to strive for whom has become my Dharma, the hoary immortal Hindu people whom I Worship as the veritable manifestation of Eternal Divine. I pray that they rouse themselves to their consciousness and freely and boldly exercise their right of vote without being misled, without being distracted or frightened into upholding any individual or party. Let them be alert and

discriminate, and resolutely vote for men and parties dedicated to the Hindu people and Hindu Cause, free from narrow-minded parochialism, progressive, broad-minded and catholic in their outlook, free from unseemly hatred and uncalled-for antagonism to people of differing views, dominantly and essentially Hindu, possessing sterling character, individual and national, determined to serve the people and the country with devotion who know the value and method of homogeneous coordinated action and possess faith and devotion to the Motherland, the Nation and the people and who can shoulder the heaviest and most onerous task completely disregarding all personal comfort, and the voters will not have voted in vain. They will have chosen rightly, and helped in laying unshakable foundations of a flourishing and honourable national life with all that it connotes in our dear Motherland - our *Bharat Mata.*

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12 SWADESHI & COW-PROTECTION CAMPAIGNS

September 1952. The Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh met in Nagpur. It passed two important resolutions one of which was about Swadeshi. It was natural for many people to raise the question - how logical was it for the Sangh to again raise the issue of swadeshi five years after the end of the foreign rule? However Sangh had been advocating Swadeshi right from the beginning. Dr. Hedgewar had considered the spirit of Swadeshi as the ideological basis of the Thought and Action of the Sangh and had participated whole heartedly in all such movements. The Congress had conducted a campaign for Swadeshi under Gandhiji's leadership. In the Tilak era, Swadeshi had been an important constituent of the four-point plan for the freedom movement.

Awakening the Swadeshi Spirit

The Sangh's essence of nationalistic ideology was Swadeshi; its flag was Swadeshi, festivals Swadeshi, its physical education system Swadeshi, its prayer Swadeshi and even its method of inculcating *samskaras* was Swadeshi. Doctorji himself always wore Swadeshi clothes. Not only was his thinking completely Swadeshi and never took recourse to any of the foreign ideas or thought patterns, he also insited that every one of our thoughts and style of behaviour should be Swadeshi.

In the initial stages the Sangh may well have used some Western systems, but it was just temporary. He did not hesitate to temporarily follow some systems that were useful for Sangh work, but even while doing so he never suffered from any kind of inferiority complex. The reason was clear. He already had decided about replacing as soon as possible, the Western medhods with the indigenous ones. Command words in English were replaced by those in Samskrit, and the Ghosh, (band) came to be played in classical Bharatiya tunes.

Shri Guruji also inculcated the *samskars* of Swadeshi in the minds of the Swayamsevaks in the context of nationalism as a whole. Of

course, he cautioned that insistence on Swadeshi should not go to rediculous extents like using an hour glass for telling the time.

Clarifying his position in this context, Shri Guruji said, "Before independence, we felt resentment against the foreign rules, so people were naturaly attracted to Swadeshi. But with the exit of the British, foreign articles are being used all the more, because before independence Swadeshi was just a means of expressing our anti-British feeling. Love for Swadeshi did not have the positive content of chaste patriotism in it".

In his speeches, in which Shri Guruji defined Swadeshi in clear ideological terms, he also called upon the people to be alert in the propagation of Swadeshi. This same feeling was reflected in the resolution passed by the Sangh. It directed the Swayamsevaks to first take the pledge of Swadeshi themselves, and then motivate the people for it.

Shri Guruji used to say that love for Swadeshi should be the constant, guiding spirit of the nation. He also expected this spirit to be expressed even in small matters. He did not approve of weddings in which the bride and the groom were dressed in Western style. He also very much disapproved of invitation cards or congratulatary messages being printed in English. In fact he intensely disliked the slavish mentality of apint foreigners in any aspect of our life. When beauty contests began to be held for choosing 'Miss India' he once remarked, "We really miss India in this whole affairs."

At the same time, if anybody returned after living abroad for some time Shri Gurugi certainly expected him to cultivate the enthusiasm, openness and comraderie that he might have observed in the society there. Talking about blind imitation he once said, "How strange it is that we have adopted only the external attributes of the Western civilisation, but not the patriotism and national pride that can be seen in the life of the Westerner in peace time as well as in times of adversity. These we ignore altogether. A few decades ago, the British had to face severe economic crisis in spite of all its resources. At that time they met the challenge unitedly. They sucessrully revived the spirit of Swadeshi to save their country from economic ruin."

Shri Guruji never failed to stress upon Swadeshi life style in

matters like food, dress, festivals, speech etc. There is a memorable instance of Shri Guruji's Swadeshi spirit at a dinner programme. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad had organised a conference of scholars in Madras. On the final day, a dinner was organised in a *Mangal Karyalaya*. When Shri Guruji reached the venue to inspect the arrangements he saw tables and chairs being arranged for the dinner. Greatly displeased, he asked the manager of the *Karyalaya,* "Don't you have Bharatiya style of sitting arrangements?" The manager replied, 'Of course we have. We can seat as many people as you want.' Shri Guruji said, "Remove these tables and chairs, and make Bharatiya-style of arrangements." Immediately, the management set to work and new arrangements complete with *Rangoli* and *Agarbatti* were made. A satisfied Shri Guruji said, "Now this is a befitting arrangement for the dinner of a conference of Hindu scholars."

To those who said wearing Bharatiya dress would undermine their dignity he said, 'Status does not depend upon clothes, it depends upon your qualities and your strength of conviction. If we adopt our own way of life even foreigners would respect us." In this regard, he used to narrate his own experience: "I was a student at a College in Nagpur managed by Scottish missionaries. Once we students organised a dinner in a completely Maharashtrian style. We invited the Principal and two other European professors to the dinner and informed them that they would have to wear *dhotis* and sit down bare-bodied. The Principal declined the invitation due to a false pride in Christianity. But the other two professors, who were quite aged, accepted the invitation and even argued with the principal, saying "When our students are inviting us in good faith where is the difficulty in going?" The Principal agreed, and all the three Europeans sat down in *dhotis* and ate with their hands in the Maharashtrian style and enjoyed it too. Even in those days insistence on pride in our own life-style used to meet with such a positive response."

Shri Guruji's comprehensive thinking on Swadeshi could also be seen in private discussions and meetings. In his talks with college students he used to say, "The modern fashion among young men is to look more and more feminine" and added "All this must go root and branch". Warning that growing effeminacy among the students was a sign of decline and downfall, he said, "The history of the world is

testimony to the fact that man's tendency to soften his body leads to the destruction of a nation. France, Rome and many other nations met their doom because of this. Even the kingdom established by Shivaji came to an end when people later on gave themselves upto song and dance and forgot their manly prowess."

Shri Guruji considered *Swa-bhasha* and wholesome *Hindu-samskars* as the very essence of *Swadeshi* life. A well-to-do Hindu gentleman once engaged an English lady to teach his son English, as he wanted the boy to be good at it. Referring to it Shri Guruji said, "If English conversation led the boy to thinking also in English he would never become a real patriot. Mentally he would always remain a slave of the English."

Once, when Shri Guruji was on a tour of Kerala, some teenaged Swayamsevaks played a game in his presence. Afterwards, he asked one of the Swayamsevaks, "What is the name of the game?" The boy replied, 'Extinguishing the lamp'. Then Shri Guruji asked a grown-up Swayamsevak 'Has the boy told the name right?' When he replied in the affirmative Shri Guruji said, 'No game should be named like this. In our culture, putting out a lamp is considered inauspicious. Here we say keep the lamp of knowledge burning bright. Even in games the names should be such as to inculcate good *samskaras*' Needless to say the very next day the name of the game was changed to 'challenge'. Such was Shri Guruji's comprehensive thinking on Swadeshi.

Homage to Revolutionaries

The `Abhinav Bharat' revolutionary organisation of Pune held its valedictory function in the month of May that year. This organisation had been set up for carrying on a armed struggle for attaining freedom and its source of inspiration was Swatantrya Veer Savarkar. But with the advent of independence such a revolutionary organisation remained no longer relevent, so a concluding ceremony was organised. Veer Savarkar was present on the occassion. Since Dr. Hedgewar was closely connected with the revolutionary activities, Shri Guruji was specially invited for the occasion. Senapati Bapat was in the chair who ruled that every speaker would be permitted to speak for just ten minutes.

Shri Guruji concluded his inspiring address in exactly ten minutes. In a very forceful way he stressed the need to keep the flame of

revolution burning in the nation's mind even after the attainment of independence. He said: "There are people amongst us who consider themselves great intellectuals and declare that revolutionaries were mad and misguided. The fact, however, is that these so-called intellectuals cannot bear the heat of intense patriotism of the revolutionaries. I have had the good fortune of treading on the footsteps of Dr. Hedgewar, who spent his entire life-time in the pursuit of lighting up the fire of revolution in the hearts of the younger generation. Hence I consider it a privilege to pay my homage to revolutionaries.

"Keeping the flame of an enduring patriotic revolution burning for ever in our hearts is also greatly necessary in all spheres of our national life. If we mean to bring happiness to the poor and the deprived sections and create a really happy and prosperous Bharat, to uproot all anti-national sentiments and to fulfil our life as a Hindu nation we have to pledge ourselves on this holy occasion to keep the sacred *Bhagwa* Flag the symbol of our national identity and the flame of self-sacrifice flying high for ever."

Shri Guruji was a great champion of Hindutva and the flame of Hindutva always burnt bright in his heart. In his discourses at the Sangh's summer training camps he has summarised his thoughts on Hindutva by saying. "We want nothing more or nothing less than Hindutva; going after something 'bigger' would be pointless for the present. Practical wisdom lies in avoiding the two extremes of too small and too big. Even the task of awakening human values in the hearts of aggressive powers in the world possible only through a united and strong Hindu Society." Shri Guruji never laid any store by the view that the thought of organising Hindu would prove narrow when tested on the touchstone of humanitarianism. Such a premise was totally unacceptable to him.

With the Sādhus

There was also another speech of Shri Guruji that merits special mention, because it contains the seeds of the all round public good that he initiated a decade later.

An *all-Bharat Sadhu Sammelan* had been organised in Kanpur in the month of October to which Shri Guruji has been specially invited. Taking advantage of this opportunity he shared some of his innermost thoughts with the assembled *sadhus.*

``There are innumerable *sadhus* and *sanyasis* in the country living in their maths as *Mathadhipatis.* Many of them engage theselves in *sadhana* and such other spiritual practices for realising God and also provide guidance to aspirants in such matters. But they do not seem to bother about the people at large, about the conditions of the society as such and how it could be made strong and progressive. "Shri Guruji also powerfully stressed the need for the *sadhus* to be aware of both *atmoddhār,* personal liberation, as well as *lokoddhār,* social emancipation."

Further he said: "The Bhagwa is an effulgent symbol of our ancient Hindu culture and the *sadhus* should undertake to carry message to every hearth and home as a great national penance. Such an awakening would make the people to take intense pride in their national identity as the Hindu Nation. The Bhagwa symbolises all *satwik* forces before which all the evil tendencies will eventaully disappear.

"Bharat has indeed the precious wealth of thought that can lead mankind to peace, harmony and happiness, and it has been carrying on this divine mission since times immemorial. This work needs to be taken up by the sadhus and saints once again."

In this context, he also made perceptive analysis of the ideologies of Western democracy and Russian communism and discussed the unique Hindu view of life, in that context. Making a special reference to the cold war between those two blocs, he said, ``They consider their own ideology the ideal means of achieving human welfare and talk of world peace, but they are all the time piling up arms of mass destruction for their own hegemony over the whole world. They are even prepared to use nuclear power for destruction of mankind. America had actually used atom bombs against Japan. On the otherhand, look at Arjuna's restraint in Mahabharata. He possessed the *Pashupatastra* as well as the terrible *Brahmastra.* But he used neither of them because he did not want to destroy the whole of mankind. He knew that the use of *Brahmastra* would cause severe famine for eight long years, and so he refrained from using it. Such is the speciality of our philosophy of life. So, it is necessary for our sadhus to expound it with authority for creating a genuine bond of brotherhood between man and man. Only those who have realised that the whole world is their family can effectively deliver the message of world peace. Fortunately this country still has such sadhus, saints and mahatmas."

Stressing that man expects from the sadhu the same role that he expects of his own mother, Shri Guruji gave the example of a boy who had been caught while committing a grave crime. He started committing small thefts, but his mother did not restrain him. Later on, he became so used to stealing that he became a dacoit, a murderer and got caught, and was sentenced to death. He expressed his final desire to see his mother. When she came he made it appears if he wanted to whisper something in her ear, took his mouth near her ear, and bit it so hard that it got severed. There was consternation all round but the man justified his action saying, 'My mother is responsible for my becoming a dacoit and a murderer. Had my mother warned me in time about my misdeeds I would not have been now sentenced to death. ``Thereby Shri Guruji had indirectly hinted that the fissiparous tendencies and mutual ill will prevailing in the society today are due to the apathy and inaction on the part of the sadhus towards their duty of awakening the society towards those evils. And he certainly had the moral right to say so. Even though Dr.. Hegdewar or Shri Guruji had never worn saffron both were actually sanyasis in its true sense. Shri Guruji had himself turned away from mundane social life and gone in for sadhana for attaining *Moksha,* but dedicated himself to the service of the nation and spent his entire life in worshipping God in the form of the society.

In his public speeches, and especially while addressing the religious heads, Shri Guruji always emphasised that in view of the moral and spiritual decline of our society we should consider our work as verily a Divine Mission. As a result, a new platform the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, came into being. The Parishad is the concrete form of the thoughts that Shri Guruji had expressed from time to time in various such conferences.

Historic Signature Campaign

The Sangh's Pratinidhi Sabha held in September, 1952 through a resolution made its demand for a ban on cow-slaughter. At the same time, directed that a countrywide mass-awakening campaign be launched by the Swayamsevaks in order to rouse and mobilise the innate feelings of the Bharatiya people in this regard and bring it to the notice of our Government. The resolution, passed under the guidance of Shri Guruji stated:

"The A.B.P.S. expressed its keen sense of disappointment at the

muddled policy of the General Government *vis-a-vis* the issue of cow protection. The issue is not merely an economic question for our country; it is a point of cultural sanctity and a symbol of our national oneness. As such, it is highly improper that the demand for a country-wide and total ban on cow-slaughter is being repeatedly spurned by the Central Government for the last five years.

"This Sabha wishes to remind the rulers once again through an organised expression of nation-wide public protest, of their sacred duty to protect the bovine species. The Sabha calls upon the Swayamsevaks to organise meetings, processions and such other programmes with a view to giving powerful expression to the feelings of millions of our people all over the country and thus make it obligatory upon our democratic Government to bow to the will of the people and impose a total ban on the slaughter of cow and her species."

The resolution also called upon the people at large as well as all political parties to extend their fullest co-operation to make the holy campaign a success.

A plan was further chalked out to conduct a country-wide campaign of collecting signatures on a representation to the President demanding such a ban. It was also suggested that the campaign should be accompanied by propaganda aids like public meetings, morchas, exhibitions, posters, pamphlets, article etc., for rousing public opinion. It was decided to commence the campaign on the auspicious occasion of *Gopāshtami* on Oct. 26 and conclude it in Delhi on Nov.22. Shri Guruji also issued a statement on Oct. 13,1952, calling upon all people to co-operate with the Sangh Swayamsevaks in signing the memorandum and appealed for donations for making the campaign country-wide and effective. In addition, he sent personal letters to various newspapers, eminent leaders, writers, scholars, thinkers, religious leaders and social workers to explain his stand and request their co-operation.

Shri Guruji also wrote a personal letters to Swatantrya Veer Savarkar on this issue which bears repetition, as it shows not only his deeply felt devotional reverence for *Go Mātā* and Bharat Mata but also the clarity of his wide-range of thinking. Shri Guruji wrote :

'The people's apathy towards their points of reverence and their habit of shamelessly suffering destruction by foreigners of objects of

their sacred faith like the cow and its progeny had made them allow even the partition of Bharat Mata to take place. It was a cardinal sin, and it is still there. No self-respecting person will ever rest till this stain is washed away. However, one finds eminent leaders justifying the sin of partition. Our culture says *Go Mātā* and Bharat Mata are verily one and the same. Then can those encouraging or conniving at the slaughter of *Go Mata* be devotees of Bharat Mata?" It goes without saying that Savarkar also affixed his signature to the appeal.

Shri Guruji's statements and appeals were widely welcomed all over the country. In accordance with the plan, the campaign began on the auspicious occasion of Gopashtami. Thousands of public meetings and yatras were organised and resolutions demanding a ban of cow slaughter passed throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The campaign in Mumbai began with a mammoth meeting addressed by Shri Guruji. Addressing the gathering he pointed out that the demand for the ban was sound on all counts and explained its supreme national importance. In the course of his speech, he said :

"The first duty of a free and self-respecting nation should be to remove all signs of its past slavery. The rejuvenation of the Somnath Temple is indeed a most welcome step in this direction."

"We cannot be called a free people so long as our life-styles and our thinking pattern continue to be under the foreign influence. We will really experience freedom only when every one of us feels an intense urge to eliminate all such tendencies and resolve to solve the problems created by thousands of years of slavery and to achieve for our nation the pride of place in the comity of nations."

"Today we find among our people a serious absence of viewing Bharat as our holy motherland and the decline of devotion to our hoary *Dharma*. If we keep on forgetting our historic points of honour and reverence in this manner there would be no such points left for us at all. If unfortunately this happens, on what foundation shall we build a glorious temple of our nation ?"

"A nation that lets its points of faith be destroyed can never hope to rise. We no doubt want to see that our national makes progress, but we find ourselves surrounded on all sides by conflicting sectarian and political differences and divisions. So we have concluded that it is

necessary to bring all people together on an ideological level by providing a point of faith and reverence that is common to all. What can such a universally acceptable point be ? Our country may well have political and sectarian diversity, but there is no doubt that the cow evokes a unique and incomparable feeling of reverence in the hearts of one and all. Thus can the cow bring us all together. So let us strengthen our reverence for *Go Mata* and use it to rekindle our unifying national spirit."

In this speech, Shri Guruji also stated that it was necessary even for Muslims and Christians to support the campaign. Explaining the Sangh's stand in this respect, he said.

'Suppose somebody wants to become an American citizen and is eligible for it, what flag will he have to honour on going there?

Can he honour the Indian Tricolour? Of course not. He will have to take pride in the American Flag.

"This is about the flag. Now let us take the case of national heroes. Whom will he have to honour? Of course, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In the USA we are not prevented from worshipping Rama and Krishna but at the same time he will have to accept their heroes and points of honour as well".

"In the same way, Christians and Muslims will have to become a part and parcel of the national mainstream of this country. They will have to live by the country's civil code and accept this country's national festival and national heroes as their own. I would even say they should honour Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Once they become a part of our national mainstream and take inspiration from the great men of Bharat we will have no objection to Muslims going to mosques and taking the name of the Paigamber and Christians going to Church and reading the Bible. They will have the freedom to practice their respective religions as individuals. However, from the point of view of the society as a whole they must accept the life-style of this country. If we all accept this ideology, all of us shall certainly be able to progress as a people and as a nation."

Shri Guruji justified a ban on cow-slaughter from the economic point of view also. At the same time, he came down heavily on those who wanted to earn dollars at the cost of our national points of faith and reverence.

Till Nov. 23 the Swayamsevaks went systematically about the task of collecting people's signatures on the representation demanding a total central ban on cow slaughter and there was no opposition anywhere. People willingly signed the representation, considering it as their religious duty and social responsibility. But once Pt.Nehru thundered that it was a political stunt of the Sangh, immediately thereafter Congress leaders, Muslims and Christians began having second thoughts about signing the memorandum. The Congress Secretary Sriman Narayan even issued a *fatwah* forbidding Congressmen from cooperating with the campaign.

All the same, members of various political parties did give their signatures on a wide scale. Nearly 54,000 Sangh workers reached personally 85,000 cities, towns and villages and collected nearly two crore signatures. The forms were sent to Delhi and entire collection displayed in a mile and a half long impressive procession on Dec.7.

The procession culminated in a huge public meeting at the Ram Lila grounds. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji also addressed the meeting and, Shri Guruji heartily thanked all those who had worked hard to make the campaign a great success.

In his thanks-giving speech he gave a convincing and incisive reply to Nehru's remark that the campaign was a political stunt. Quoting Acharya Vinoba Bhave he said, "Vinobaji says *'Sabhee bhoomi Gopal ki,'* but I ask, does this land belong to *Gopalas* or to those who commit *Go-hatya?* Maharshi Dayananda had also exposed this Cause. Was that also a political stunt ? Some days ago Pt.Nehru went to Sanchi for a programme for consecrating the remains of two disciples of Bhagwan Buddha. When the programme was over, he went to Bhilsa, six miles away, and declared that cow-slaughter shall continue. Immediately after paying homage to Buddha's non-violence he declared continuance of cow-slaughter. What a homage!"

Finally, Shri Guruji made an emotional appeal to Hindus to protect their points of honour even if the whole world went against them.

On Dec. 8, Shri Guruji along with Lala Hans Raj Gupta, the then Prant Sanghachalak, called on the Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendra Prasad and presented him the collection of signatures. The Rashtrapati assured him that he would urge the Government to consider the matter

sympathetically. Actually, the Rastrapati himself was all for such a ban. But despite this unparalled record in the world of collecting signatures for the resolution of a national problem, the Government ignored it altogether. Thereby those who called themselves democratic rulers trampled upon the people's will and good of the people for their own narrow partisan ends.

It is possible for some people to hold that so far as the outcome was concerned the campaign was a failure. But that is simply not true. In course of time many Provincial Governments did pass anti-cow slaughter laws. But the Central Government remained obstinate. To date, this serious deficiency remains. But even after the campaign came to an end. Shri Guruji did not allow the Government to pigeonhole the issue. Exactly a year after the submission of the signatures to the Rashtrapati, another attempt was made by the Sangh starting from 2 Nov. upto 14, 1953 in order to draw the attention of the Government towards this massive public opinion. Meetings, assemblies and processions were again oganised on a nation-wide scale towards that end.

In 1954, *Kumbha Mela* was held in Prayag in the month of *Magh* in which Shri Guruji was also present. On this auspicious occasion, a special programme was organised by the Anti-Cow-slaughter Committee; signatures were collected from Pt.Nehru's own constituency and submitted to the Government, with the express intention acquainting Pt.Nehru with the widespread sentiments of his own electorate. In all 2,57,580 voters among Nehru's electorate had signed the memorandum demanding a ban on cow slaughter, which number happened to be more by one and a half times of the votes polled by Pt.Nehru in the 1952 election. Along with the collected signature sent to Pt.Nehru, a representation enclosed with it said that he should now come forward to back the demand when it came up for discussion in parliament since an advocate of cow-slaughter can never represent them.

Despite all this the Prime Minister cared not even for his own voters demand. During these days, the subject figured again and again in every one of his speeches, articles and press conferences.

The Government of Bharat has not, till today, passed a law for the protection of the cow and its progeny. Because of this negative attitude, anit-cow slaughter laws passed by the State Governments cannot be implemented in full. Shri Guruji was also far from happy with the anti-

cow slaughter committees set up by the Government from time to time. He thought it a waste of time to attend such meetings of the official committee. In exasperation he would say, ' Banning cow-slaughter can be done in just one minute. What is the need of a committee that drags on for six months ?'

Shri Guruji was not for Satyagraha or fasts as parts of the agitation. But in 1966, Shankaracharya of Puri went on a fast and Prabhudutt Brahmachari did the same in Vrindavan. Massive demonstrations were held in the capital. The agitation hotted up. Rumour was rife that the President was about to issue an Ordinance banning cow-slaughter. However the decision was not to issue any such ordinance and the reason given out was that it would contravene an earlier verdict of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruling had permitted slaughter of old cattle and bullocks unfit for agricultural purposes. If an ordinance was issued, so the argument went, it would go against the slaughter of even such animals. Strongly criticising the Supreme Court ruling, Shri Guruji said 'cow' includes its progeny, as 'man' includes 'women'. But ignoring this commonly accepted fact bullocks had been separated from cows.

The warning Shri Guruji had sounded in August 1952 had come out true. At that time, a meeting of representatives of forty anti-cow slaughter bodies had been held, but it did not show much enthusiasm for a fresh campaign. Addressing this meeting, Shri Guruji said: "Never before was the atmosphere so favourable for a ban on cow-slaughter as it is today. If despite such favourable conditions, the Government cannot be made to take steps against cow slaughter it would not be possible to stop such slaughter for the next 4-5 years, because in the days to come the Government would be faced with many more serious problems and it would be quite impossible to divert the attention of the people and the Government from them towards the question of cow protection."

This prophecy came true to a letter. Not that attempts were not made to focus attention on the issue. But neither the people nor the Government gave it priority. Gradually the agitation subsided. To date a final solution to this problem is not in sight. The export of beef and slaughter of animals useful for agricultural operations have become an ever growing serious problem. There is no possibility of the so-called

secularists taking any steps that would displease the Muslim and Christians. Shri Guruji had said without mincing words that this reluctance goes back to Pt.Nehru's policies. In this connection in a meeting of prominent citizens of Guwahati in 1955 he quoted - a letter written by Nehru to Jinnah on 6.4.1938, wherein Nehru had assured Jinnah saying :

"As regards cow-slaughter, there has been a great deal of entirely false and unfounded propaganda against the Congress suggesting that the Congress was going to stop it forcibly by Legislation. The Congress does not wish to undertake any legislative action in this matter to restrict the established rights of the Muslims."

While discussing the anti-cow - slaughter movement with Swami Purushottamananda of Parlikkad Jnanashram in Kerala in 1967, Shri Guruji had laid emphasis on two points. The first was that cow-slaughter began in this country only after the foreign rule was established here. " So it is a serious blemish on our national life. The Muslim started it and made it a practice in their kingdoms. Now we are free and it is our duty to remove all such blemishes of pre-independence days. If we do not perform this duty we would fall a prey to mental slavery. But cow-slaughter has not only not been banned after independence, it has increased manifold. Even in 1944-45 it had increased to 50 to 100 percent more than before. This may have been because during the British times foreign forces were stationed here, but ever after these forces have left and we became independent, cow-slaughter has gone up by over 20 times."

Shri Guruji's second point was that a Central Law banning cow-slaughter throughout the country was most essential. Explaining why it was so, he said,"We must bear in mind that the British had prohibited the use of beef and pork for the army. We should also recall the reasons that had led to the War of Independence of 1857. Now pork is prohibited in the army but beef is freely used. There is a law prohibiting cow-slaughter in some states like Uttar Pradesh, but the Centre has suggested that it be amended, so as to permit slaughter of useless cattle for the army. This would certainly entail the dangerous possibility of even good cattle being slaughtered. In the whole process, the anti-cow slaughter act itself is fast becoming meaningless. One of the important reasons of why we are demanding a Central Law for the

whole country is that despite an anti-cow slaughter law in areas like the Mysore State, cows are slaughtered in the adjoining areas and the beef smuggled into Mysore for sale."

Shri Guruji also said it seemed foreign powers were bringing pressure against the opposition to cow slaughter. He said, "Some leaders have argued that we would lose foreign exchange if we do not export beef. This makes the factor of foreign pressure clear. Americans and others want hide and cheap beef from us. And they also want that Bharat should become dependent on their milk powder. The U.S. it seems, is pressurising the Government of Bharat for this. They say there will be no American aid if Bharat stopped cow slaughter. Can we compromise our points of honour and our ideals for the sake of such foreign exchange ?"

Shri Guruji will be remembered forever as the only leaders who effectively took this national issue to all levels of the society, from the common to the country's top leaders and rulers. At the time of the freedom movement, Gandhiji had of course considered cow protection an integral part of his concept of Swaraj. He had upheld reverence for *Go-Mata* as an index of the greatness of Hindu culture. But after independence, he could not get the opportunity to develop this thought to the extent that it could have had an impact on neither popular opinion nor on shaping the Government's policies. Shri Guruji made up for this. It can even be said that Shri Guruji did his best to fulfil Gandhiji's dream in this aspect.

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13 NATION'S ALERT SENTINEL

The five-year period from 1947 to 1952 saw a series of momentous events - the bloody partition of the country in 1947, the political independence gained against this tragic background, the merger of princely states, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhiji followed by ban on Sangh and its eventual unconditional withdrawal, adoption of our independent Constitution, and the first general elections that followed it in 1952. These events had doubtless a long-lasting impact on our people generating various thought currents coursing through their minds.

The question was it possible for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to keep aloof from these events? During the bloody period of Partition the Swayamsevaks had staked even their lives in the cause of protecting Hindus. In the wake of Gandhiji's assassination, the Sangh was scorched by people's fury in spite of being innocent. But it passed successfully through this fairy ordeal also and came out shining like pure gold. Still a question kept coming up in the minds of the Swayamsevaks as to what would be the stand of Sangh in the context of the new order of things?

The question of attaining freedom, though partitioned, had been solved. The centuries-old agony of slavery had subsided. Not the question that remained was of building a new, resurgent Bharat. How was this reconstruction to be done? Many other similar questions also arose in the minds of workers. The election results of 1952 provided one such occasion.

Beyond Election Results

In the catastrophic times of 1947, thousands of Sangh workers had saved their Hindu brethren from Pakistani marauders. The Sangh had earned the wholesome praise of our people at that time. Many Sangh workers had also contested the general elections in 1952, but, the winners did not include even a single one of them. All of them had lost badly, belying all their fond expectation. Those who accepted partition without qualms and left their uprooted brethren to their pitiable plight

without any sense of shame had been elected to the seats of power. The sacrifices made by the Sangh Swayamsevaks may well have been selfless, but at least in the context of elections its results caused deep disappointment among many of them.

As a result, many workers in the Punjab-Delhi region felt severely depressed. Alongside of this, many problems like Kashmir, linguistic reorganisation of states, the right meaning of a secular state, the place of other (Christian and Muslim) communities in Bharat etc., had became hot topics of discussing in public also.

The initial period after the attainment of independence natuarally formed the all-important phase of laying the foundation of all aspects of national reconstruction for the future. Consequently, the social and political atmosphere was thick of dust of all sorts of arguments and counter arguments. In this polluted atmosphere, the efforts that Shri Guruji made to focus the attention of the workers on the basic problems of national life and to acquaint the people outside the Sangh also with their duty as the sons and daughters of the motherland, were indeed such as to earn the gratitude of all future generations.

Basically, Dr. Hedgewar had founded the Sangh to organise the Hindus, to cleanse the Hindu society of those social deficiencies that had led to its slavery and to make in once again might and glorious. In his view Independence was just a stage in this journey to all round national glory.

After the Second World War, the international situation and Britan's inability to hold on to its empire had forced it to hand over freedom to Bharat. Hence, had the Sangh lost its purpose? Shri Guruji said "No", and outlined in clear terms the Sangh's role in independent Bharat. At the same time he did not disturb Doctorji's ideological basing and the method of work. Rather, he successfully re-established faith in them.

For this purpose, in March 1954 Shri Guruji undertook a programme of open and detailed discussions with *pracharaks* at the district level and above drawn from all over the country, lasting for eight days from March 9 to March 16. The venue selected for this camp was Sindi on the Nagpur - Wardha road. The place had a special significance, for it was there that in 1939 Dr. Hedgewar along with all his senior

colleagues had adopted the Sangh's Samskrit prayer and placed the Sangh's method of work on a firm footing.

Now, 15 years later, a camp was being held at the same place for engaging in some basic thinking on formulating the Sangh's ideology and methodology in the new context of Independence. The place was the same, but the context had changed. While winding up the deliberations on March 16, 1954, Shri Guruji recalled the meeting of 1939 and said,

"At that time (in 1939) we had affirmed our faith in our mission and determined to work incessantly for its success. Slightly more than a year after that, Doctorji breathed his last. Still we continued to concentrate on our work and succeeded in taking it forward. If now the circumstances around us have created any doubts in our minds, let us clear all of them and again affirm our determination to work without rest or respite to make the Sangh a most effective force in our respective areas. Let us make the Sangh so effective and far-reaching that no individual will remain untouched by it. May we infuse every field of national life with our ideological fervour and reach our goal of supreme national glory in the earliest possible period."

It is not intended here to give a full report of the deliberations at Sindi. But it is sufficient to say that Shri Guruji spoke at length and freely answered workers' queries on many matters like - what is the life-purpose of independent Bharat in the light of the Hindu view of life? What is the likely end result of the various ideologies of the world? What are the basic life principles of Hindu society? And what are the special features of the Sangh's uniquely successful methodology? At the end, Shri Guruji made an inspiring and touching appeal to the workers for taking up the work of Sangh as their life-mission. In that initial period of 1954, when independent Bharat was beset with a growing number of problems, Shri Guruji, with every word of his dripping with confidence said "It is our work alone that has the strength to save the country from the adversities of today and the problems of tomorrow. Nothing else can accomplish this."

At the same time, he called upon the *pracharaks* to remove all personal thoughts from their minds and work with fullest dedication to the Cause and Cause alone without doubt. His inspiring words and shining own personal example carried the magic to motivate the workers carry out his call to the last letter.

Even before 1954, workers of the Sangh had been of course active in various fields. But at Sindi Shri Guruji laid maximum stress on concentrating on the Shakha-oriented Sangh work. The Shakha is the fountain-head of the strength of the Sangh, as also the crucible for moulding of all its *samskaras*. So, if the Shakha was strong enough then only would the work in other fields also become effective. He equated the Sangh system of work with the worship of *Rashtra Purusha* and urged all the workers in whatever field they were working, to concentrate on this basic devotional aspect of the Sangh's mission.

With this guidance etched in their minds the workers returned to their fields of work with renewed zeal and dedication. The result was a perceptible spread of Sangh work all over the country. Shri Guruji also paid special attention to the quality of the workers. In all his discussions he emphasised that the worker should have the qualitative capacity to take proper and right decision in his field of work. He referred in this connection to the Sangh workers who were active and successful in various fields like newspapers, education, political and student and labour organisations.

Often people ask from where does the Sangh get so many dedicated *pracharaks* to work for its mission even in distant parts of the country. On what kind of ideological basis do the Sangh *pracharaks* lead an ascetic life year after year? The answer to all such questions can be found in the free and frank discussions Shri Guruji had with the workers at Sindi. Shri Guruji himself was a living example in this respect. His thoughts, and words tallied with his life and action perfectly. Doctorji's and Shri Guruji's dedicated life examples as well as the burning idealism nurtured in Sangh formed the undying source of inspiration for the workers. Shri Guruji's basic and mature thinking on such varied subjects as Hindu values of life, spirituality and tradition of national heroes enabled him to explain with facility coupled with suitable example how a Sangh worker should view his life.

In the decade after independence, Shri Guruji kept himself extremely busy spreading the Sangh work, but he was also closely watching, studying and analysing the developments taking place around him. He kept himself posted with all such detailed information, and on its basis kept on, whenever such on occasion arose alerting and warning the people and the Government. He considered it his bounden

duty to criticise and expose the wrong policies of the Government and point out the right way. A look at the published reports of his speeches at various places in the country throw ample light on how vigilant Shri Guruji was about the security and welfare of the country. They also show how constantly he dwelt on the events that led to the Partition.

Those who looked upon themselves as the sole custodians of patriotism had dubbed Shri Guruji for advocating the concept of Hindu Rashtra. It was such inflated ego and ideological pollution that had made them reject his wholesome nationalistic concepts also. A few examples will suffice to make this clear.

Linguistic Reorganisation of States

In the already inflamed atmosphere involving several border disputes vis-a-vis this issue the Communist Party played its traditional role of adding fuel to the fire. Their one single aim was as always to somehow break up national unity. With this end in view, Communist leaders had been propagating since even prior to Partition that every single linguistic unit constitute a distinct nationality and Bharat a conglomeration of such nationalities.

Thus, while the political leaders hankering after cheap popularity, were making wild statements and the Soviet agents were bent upon breaking up the country and making it subservient to Soviet Union. It was left to Shri Guruji to warn in clear terms that falling a prey to linguistic jingoism would eventually break up the firm cultural foundation of national unity.

Around this time, a conference against 'provincialism' information of different states was held in Mumbai. Shri Guruji presided over it. Shri Jamnadas Mehta was the chairman of the reception committee and the then mayor Shri Dayabhai Patel inaugurated the conference. On this occasion, Shri Guruji gave a very thought - provoking presidential address.

At this very beginning he said, "I am an advocate of one country, one state. On the one hand we talk of one Government for the whole world, but on the other there are people who raise their eye-brows if somebody moots the idea of one government for the whole of Bharat.

"As a matter of fact, Bharat should have a unitary type of government and in the place of provincial governments we should have

different units based on administrative convenience and security concerns. Today our leaders talk of a Maharashtrian culture, a Gujarat culture and so on. But the fact is we have but one culture from Himalayas to Kanyakumari, which is the very heart and soul of our nation. So we must preserve this culture, its unique and wholesome values and traditions. The country must not be turned into a mere *dharmashala*. We must give up all talk of compromises and only think of the interest of the nation as a whole."

Shri Guruji's opposition to the linguistic reorganisation of states was greeted with considerable criticism in Maharashtra. But that made absolutely no difference to his stand. Whatever the circumstances, he stood firm by his convictions. This steadfastness was in ample evidence at the time of the Samyukta Maharashtra agitation also. Prime Minister Nehru had accepted the creation of a Andhra state on a linguistic basis, but Maharastra and Gujarat were clubbed together for creating a bilingual state. Agitations were launched against this decision, but the Government resorted to brute force and firing to suppress them. Shri Guruji strongly condemned these repressive tactics. He issued a statement charging that the Government wanted to suppress the *Satyagraha* with the help of goondas and that no one should put up with such officially sponsored goondaism. "I shall be failing in my duty if I do not roundly condemn it" he declared.

One more instance is worth quoting. Pt. Nehru was to visit Pratapgarh to inaugurate a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti decided to strongly oppose the programme. Preparations began for holding a big demonstration against it. But Shri Guruji thought it highly improper to do so. He publicly stated that from the national point of view it was not proper to express opposition in this manner. Actually, the programme was politically motivated and meant for wooing the Marathi mind towards the Congress. But still as Nehru was going to honour the memory of Shivaji Maharaj, opposition to Nehru in this case amounted to belittling Shivaji and hence was most improper.

In a statement issued on this occasion, Shri Guruji said "agreeing to unveil a statue of Shivaji Maharaj was in fact a climb-down for Pt. Nehru, who had many times before egoistically insulted him. Now the ruler of the whole of Bharat is comit to honour a great national hero

even though belatedly. This is an occasion for proclaiming the greatness of Shivaji in the context not only of Maharashtra but of the whole of Bharat. This is a unique opportunity that has come our way to reveal to the whole world the matchless greatness of this gigantic personality. So we must do nothing to spoil it. Doing so would be an insult to Shivaji. So I urge all people not to act thoughtlessly but to participate whole heartedly in the programme."

The statement evoked both favourable as well as unfavourable responses, but it forced the supporters of the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti to rethink about their position. The situation had to take a new turn and the function went on with all the expected grace and grandeur.

About Punjab

Later the issue of a Punjabi Suba came up and two administrative units of Punjab and Haryana were formed. Even when this controversy was at its peak, Shri Guruji took the firm stand that the whole nation was one and all Bharatiya languages were national languages. He also said that those whose mother tongue was Punjabi should honestly write it down as their mother-tongue in spite of Punjabi being so were making a big mistake. This stand greatly displeased many Arya Samajists, and even the workers of the Jana Sangh felt uncomfortable. But time of Punjab and elsewhere quote Shri Guruji's timely guidance with respect. And this, in turn had helped in further strengthening the traditional amity between the two section the Sikhs and other Hindus.

Later on also the same attitude was adhered to by the Sangh under even the greatest provocation when terrorism aided and abetted by Pakistan stalked Punjab. Even the Sangh Shakhas were attacked and many Swayamsevaks lost their lives. Still the Sangh acted with great restraint. It took the stand that Sikhs were Hindus and attempts to pit Hindu against Hindu was a conspiracy to ignite a civil war which must never be allowed to succeed. Without doubt this stand substantially contributed to bringing peace and harmony between the *Keshadharis* and other Hindus in Punjab.

In the southern parts of our country too, Shri Guruji urged that the linguistic controversies be resolved on the premise of all languages being equally national. Around 1966-67, the anti-Hindu agitation in Tamil Nadu was in full heat. During that period a public function in

Tamil Nadu was in full heat. During that period a public function was arranged by the Sangh which was presided over by Shri R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar, a former central Minister and who had vehemently opposed the place of Hindi while speaking in the Constituent Assembly. The function was addressed by Shri Guruji. During the course of is speech. Because they all express the same national and cultural content of our country. But what language would be the people of one language use while conversing with the people of another language? Any Bharatiya language can in fact serve as a contact language for the whole of the country. However it would obviously be convenient to choose Hindi as a contact language since it is spoken and understood by the largest number of people.

``Later in his presidential speech, Shri Chettiar said, "If this is the approach, I am all for Hindi." There were many such occasions during this period when Shri Guruji had to speak out the unpleasant truth. The boundary dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka had also become extremely sensitive. All the same Shri Guruji stressed upon cultural unity and national integrity on all such occasions.

Even in small matters, Shri Guruji was particular in emphasising the imperative supreme need for national unity. The speeches he delivered during his constant travels are replete with instances indicating his alertness towards ensuring the good of the nation as a whole. Here is a small instance about how confident he himself was in his vigilance. Once, during a tour of Kerala in 1956, he went to Pattambi for an oil-massage. The massage would go on for an hour, and then he would be led to the bathroom for a bath with hot water. Near the bathroom the Vaidya said, 'Please step carefully, the floor is slippery because of the oil" Shri Guruji was at the door of the bathroom. He looked back and replied in a most natural maner.

"You are no doubt right in warning me, but Golwalkar is not born to slip and fall. It is a second nature with him to take every step carefully and firmly."

Shri Guruji was sad to see that whether it was the language issue or of reorganisation of states the Government accepted the people's demands only when there were agitations, bloodshed and violent explosion of popular feelings. An instance in point was the formation of a linguistic Andhra State after Potti Sriramulu's fast unto death and

eruption of violence. Shri Guruji felt that once the formation of states was accepted by the S.R.C. a particular language group can very well have more than one state. In the beginning of 1973, there was a strong demand for a separate Telangana State to be carved out of Andhra state. The Communists had incited large-scale violence and damage to public property.

In this connection, Shri Guruji said, 'Law and order could be endangered by the Government policy of acceding to a demand or two only when there are fire agitations. Why do they have to wait for an outbreak of violence? The best way is to accept a demand straight away if it is just and logical. Andhra and Telangana can be separated as two if by doing so the interest of the people is served. There is no harm in having two states for one language. However, caution should be exercised while creating new states in border regions or regions of strategic importance. If Assam can be divided into seven tiny states under pressure from anti-national forces, cannot Andhra be split into two states in a friendly atmosphere? Actually, it was basically wrong to reorganise states on a purely linguistic basis. Even now fissiparous tendencies can be contained by forming states on the basis of administrative convenience, which would include a common language as one of the factors. I still believe that a unitary form of Government suits our national genius best.

Liberation of Goa

In two more contexts, also Shri Guruji had to express his emphatic views on unifying basis of our nationhood. One of them was in respect of Goa. In 1947, the British had left Bharat but the Portuguese stayed put in Goa. It was decided to wage a campaign against the Portuguese rule. For this purpose, a Goa liberation committee was set up in Pune. Representatives of all political parties as well as independent leaders of eminence had been included in the committee. As a matter of policy it was proper that the Government of Bharat itself should came forward to liberate Goa. So the committee urged the Central Government to take action in that regard. Later on the Goa liberation campaign by the people was launched. In 1955 Swayamsevaks of the Sangh jumped into the struggle and Rajabhau Mahankal, a Swayamsevak from Ujjain, fell to Portuguese bullets and became a martyr. The *Satyagrahis* were invariably subjected to inhuman atrocities in the jail. Still the *Satyagraha* continued.

But instead of acting against the Portuguese colonialism, the Government of Bharat clamped restraints on the *Satyagrahis* themselves. Shri Guruji too was closely watching the Government's attitude. On August 20, 1955, he issued a statement in Mumbai, in which he said, "This is a golden opportunity to take police action in Goa, which will by liberating Goa enhance our national prestige and also serve a warning to those countries that keep on threatening us."

Shri Guruji used to say that it was because of pressure from the Western contries, particularly Britain, that the Government of Bharat was not taking strong steps for the liberation of Goa. "It is necessary to free Goa come what may, and take the necessary steps". If the Government of Bharat succumbs to British pressure our independence would mean nothing. Such political independence is worthless. Shri Guruji would express himself quite clearly and emphatically and neither cared nor feared any one's opposition. The only thing he intensely cared for was the good of the nation.

He considered the question of Goa a vital national issue. However he said "Congress leaders neither looked at the Goa problem as a national issue nor did they try to organise nationalist forces for its resolution. They always looked upon the *Satyagraha* as a ploy by the Opposition." Goa is very much an integral part of Bharat, and our history stands testimony to this fact. But in case the Government of Bharat does not propose to use armed force for its liberation, what then? What should be done then? In view of the experience of the Government's attitude towards the *Satyagraha* of 1955, if the people wanted to take some direct action to make up for the Government's inaction he was all for it. Some valiant youngmen of the Sangh had already successfully launched armed action and liberated Dadra and Nagar Haveli. One of them is the well-known musician Sudhir Phadke, who has stated in his recollections of the movement that although the liberation struggle was not launched after direct consultations with Shri Guruji his consent was taken for grated in view of his positive views in all such matters.

Shri Phadke says that this group of youngmen had prepared a similar plan for Goa's liberation also around 1962. He and some other youths were in close liaison with Goa freedom fighters like Dr. Pundalik Gaitonde, Shri Mohan Ranade and others. Dr. Gaitonde had just

returned to Bharat from England and intensely desired to see areas freed. Finally, a plan was chalked out to liberate some areas adjoining Bharat on the strength of arms and establish there an independent administration under Dr. Gaitonde's leadership. Shri Guruji was consulted and he too agreed to this plan. He was also prepared to provide man-power and funds. In this connection, Shri Sudhir Phadke met Shri Guruji thrice. On this occasion too Shri Guruji's alertness was in evidence. Dr. Gaitonde and Prime Minister Nehru were on close terms. So Shri Guruji instructed Phadke to ask Dr. Gaitonde to state clearly if he was prepared to lead the plan despite Nehru's opposition. Only when the reply was received in the affirmative did Shri Guruji give the green signal.

The assurance was also secured that till the entry into Portuguese territory the Government of Bharat would place no hurdles in the way, rather it would provide all assistance and guidance. But before the Swayamsevaks could take action, the Indian Army marched into Goa. The all too patent reason was that Shri Krishna Menon was a Congress candidate in the elections of 1962 and armed action for Goa's liberation was taken for his electoral benefit and, in general for improving the electoral chances of the Congress party. Still, although belated, it was widely acclaimed. Shri Guruji too welcomed it. However the fact remains that the Government of Bharat had not viewed the liberation of Goa as a national problem but viewed only from its own partisan angle.

Once Goa was freed, Nehru and other political leaders started saying that they would preserve its 'separate culture'. Instead of merging it with the adjoining Maharashtra State, Goa was declared a centrally administered territory. This created vested political interests of the local Christian minority and led to political instability. Shri Guruji totally disapproved of this concept of so called separate culture. He emphatically said, 'If Goa has a separate culture it can only be Portuguese culture. But Goa is a living limb of Bharat, so it can have only one culture; that is Bharatiya culture, nothing else.'

Shri Guruji was ever insistent that the cultural unity of the nation must be preserved at all costs and that no vested interest be permitted to project regional diversity as a separate culture. At every step he was especially vigilant about this vital aspect of national unity.

Accession of Kashmir

The Kashmir problem is yet another important instance that also brought out Shri Guruji's vigilance. It was October 1947. Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir was in two minds whether to remain independent or join either of the, two Bharat or Pakistan. But the newly-created Pakistan was in a hurry to annex the State. It was also quite easy for Pakistan to defeat the Maharaja's army and occupy Srinagar. However Sardar Patel naturally wanted to retain Jammu-Kashmir within Bharat. But in October Pakistani raiders launched an aggression in the Kashmir valley under the cover of tribals. The plan was to unfurl the Pakistani flag in Srinagar on Oct. 26. Secret information was also received that Muslim soldiers in the Maharaja's forces had planned to join the Pakistan.

Prime Minister Nehru was obstinately siding with Sheikh Abdullah in order to ensure the latter's ascendancy to leadership in Kashmir and was also determined not to send any assistance to Kashmir unless the instrument of Accession was signed. Thus there was imminent danger of Pakistan occupying Kashmir. Pakistani invaders were advancing towards Srinagar and it was a decisive moment for Kashmir's future. Every minute was critical. Mehra Chand Mahajan, the Prime Minister of Jammu-Kashmir state was in Delhi to ask for help. On the other hand, Nehru egged on by Mountbatten was obdurately sticking to his position.

In the prevailing conficting pulls, the Maharaja was in a terrible fix, unable to come to any decision. He had many apprehensions about joining Bharat. Patel, knowing the mind of the Maharaja, pitched upon Shri Guruji to talk to him. Shri Guruji was, as Patel guaged, the right person endowed with the necessary skill and commanding the implicit confidence of both Patel and the Maharaja.

Shri Guruji flew to Srinagar on 17 October 1947 and brought home to the Maharaja the futility of harbouring any idea of retaining Kashmir as an independent kingdom. Pakistan would never tolerate it. It would engineer internal revolt by Muslims and desertions of the State's Muslim forces. Shri Guruji also put the Maharaja at ease about Bharat's capacity to supply all essential commodities. He assured that Patel would look after the interests of all sections of the Kashmir people. Finally, the Maharaja expressed his readiness to sign the

Instrument of Accession to Bharat. Shri Guruji returned to Delhi on 19 October and reported to Patel about the Maharaja's readiness to accede to Bharat.

In his meeting with Shri Guruji, Maharaja Hari Singh had also heartily praised Sangh Swayamsevaks, He said, "From time to time they have passed on to us vitally important information. At first, we found it difficult to believe such reports. But later on, we found that every such information coming from the Sangh sources was thoroughly reliable. The courage the Sangh Swayamsevaks has shown in getting information about Pakistani troop movements really deserves all praise."

But Shri Guruji's expectations about Kashmir were not wholly fulfilled. Our jawans were successfully and rapidly driving the so-called tribals out of Kashmir's borders, and it looked as if the whole of Jammu-Kashmir would be soon freed from the aggressor. Shri Guruji was of the firm opinion that military action should not be stopped till the entire Pak occupied Kashmir was fully liberated.

But suddenly, Nehru declared a unilateral ceasefire and took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations. On that very day Shri Guruji stated that taking the issue to UNO was a Himalayan blunder. He warned that the UNO was a club of interested powerful nations and Bharat would never get justice there; and time has proved him right. He emphatically said that Bharat should think of how Kashmir's Accession could be made as complete as that of other states. He advocated setting people from other provinces thereby to lay low the ghost of 'Kashmiriyat' once and for all. It was also imperative for the Government to abrogate Article 370 and to bring Jammu-Kashmir on par with other states.

Dr. Mukherji's Martyrdom

The accession of the whole of Kashmir with Bharat was a paramount political need of the hour. Unfortunately even after partition of the country the Congress policy of Muslim appeasement continued unabated. Under Sheikh Adbullah's leadership Kashmir was given the status of a separate state with a separate flag, a separate nomenclature for the head of the state and separate constitution. Nehru also talked of a referendum for solving the Kashmir problem. Dr. Mukherji rose in

revolt against this and declared that there could not be two flags, two constitutions and two prime ministers in one country. He also demanded the abrogation of Article 370 and also full integration of Kashmir with Bharat. In pursuance of this demand, *Satyagraha* was launched by the Praja Parishad, manned entirely by the Swayamsevaks and led by Premnath Dogra and Dr. Mukherji who tried to enter Kashmir. However he was arrested by the police of Kashmir and thrown behind bars, where he died under mysterious circumstances.

The tragic event shook the whole country to its depths. Shri Guruji was shocked beyond words. He had thought that under Mukherji's leadership the country's politics would progress on the path of chaste nationalism. For this purpose, he had even spared for him some of his experienced co-workers. But destiny had willed otherwise. This hope was shattered by the unexpected martyrdom of Dr. Mukherji.

Shri Guruji had sincerely felt that it was not necessary for Dr. Mukherji to personally lead the *Satyagraha,* for that could prove dangerous for his life. This was later disclosed by Shri Guruji in a speech. He had also sent a message to Dr. Mukherji requesting him not to go, but before it could reach him the programme had been already declared. For a patriot of pledged word like Mukherji there was no turning back.

Even after Dr. Mukherji's martyrdom, the Kashmir problem remained stuck up and continued to be so till 1953. That year Sheikh Abdullah was arrested. But years later he was again reinstated in power and he openly continued with the dual policy of nepotism and organising the Muslims. Due to the force of circumstances the idea of a Plebiscite receded into the background. Shri Guruji had already expressed himself strongly against that blatantly anti-national idea.

Shri Guruji said "The nation is like a living body, and no limb of the body can be considered separately. If at all plebisite poll is to be held it should be in the entire country, not in Kashmir alone. Shri Guruji said the entire country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari belonged to Bharatiyas, so it was most improper to say Kashmir belonged only to Kashmiris.

The North-East

The North-East has still remained an explosive issue. Christians

control the three states of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland. In Assam Muslim infiltrators are striving hard to become a majority. Tripura and Manipur are in the grip of grave unrest. The population of Arunachal is also being gradually proselytised by the Christian missionaries employing deceptive, alluring tactics. On all these points, time and against Shri Guruji kept on warning the people and the Government.

In his speech, on the occasion of the *Makar Sanskranti* function of the Sangh in 1951, Shri Guruji referred to these problem areas. During his country-wide travels, he made in a point to keep himself fully posted with the anti-national activities of the missionaries and their machinations to undermine the traditional religious faiths of the *janajatis* there.

A question particularly troubling them was this: how could they be considered as Hindus, accustomed as they were to beef eating, whereas the Hindus worshipped cow as their mother? This doubt was, in fact, triggered in their minds by the Christian missionary propaganda to that effect. Shri Guruji spoke to Shri Sankaracharya of Dwaraka Peetha and other prominent *satradhikars* of different Vaishnav Satras of Assam present at the Guwahati all-Hindu Conference and convinced them that the *janajatis*, who have been basically Hindus all along, had been deprived of the benefit to proper Hindu religious enlightenment for a long time solely because of lack of communication and contacts with the rest of the society and its culture. As such, it was no fault of theirs if they had remained alienated from our religious and cultural concepts such as devotion to cow. It was therefore our sacred duty to accept the *janajatis* as part of the Hindu society without any reservations.

At the public meeting in the evening, the Dwaraka Peethadheesh declared that the *janajatis* were Hindus and their eating beef had been out of sheer economic compulsion as there was no other cheap food available to them in the deep interiors of those hilly regions. The Acharya added that it was rather the fault of the so-called culturally advanced people of other areas that they had not cared to go to those hilly areas and educate in the people in the areas about the Hindu culture and heritage all these years. The *janajati* leaders and delegates felt immensely relieved and proud to hear this authentic declaration dispelling doubts about their Hindu identity.

In the conference, Shri Guruji's sitting with the *janajati* leader for meals afforded one more touching occasion for them to experience the spirit of Hindu oneness in their actual life.

Later on many conferences were organised in the North-East through the forum of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the one and only purpose of these conference was to see that the remaining Hindus there should remain Hindus. Shri Guruji made it a point to be present on all such occasions and forcefully present this uniflying view point. But there was no such perception or plan with the powers that be. As a result, this problem remained difficult to solve even to this day. Shri Guruji would ask - "If Nagaland is an integral part Bharat why should it be administratively under the External Affairs Ministry and not the Home Ministry?"

All this just indicates how deeply Shri Guruji was concerned with the national interest in whatever corner of the country it was affected. People often asked him - "If the RSS is not a political body why do you comment on political issues?" In reply, he would say: "The Sangh has no interest in capturing power, but it is our sacred duty to express ourselves on policies that affect the country's security, cultural unity and self-respect adversely."

Emphasis on Political Consensus

Shri Guruji had a very perceptive understanding of many aspects of the situation in the country. In this connection, Shri Dattopant Thengadi, founder of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh has a very enlightening story to tell. In March 1964 Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya sent Thengadi a message from Shri Guruji saying he should immediately file papers for a seat in the Rajya Sabha from Lucknow. Actually the BMS had no connection with day-to-day politics nor was it a political party. Then why this unexpected message? Although Thengadi could not fathom the reason he did as he was told, and also won the seat. Later during a visit to Nagpur, Thengadi naturally broached the subject and asked about the reason behind his candidature. Shri Guruji's reasoning, which Thengadi has recorded, was on the following lines:

"I think the powers that be will be tempted to foist dictatorship on this country. As I see it situation would become so grave that no party in the country would be in a position to offer resistance on its

own strength. Everyone will fear suppression. In such a situation, people in the opposition would be forced to think that all opposition parties should come together to fight the dictatorship. It is true that there are serious differences among the opposition parties themselves, but the circumstances would force them to think - Let us first come together to put down dictatorship, later on we can think of our internal differences. 'But at that time, the question that would confront them would be - who would do the job of bringing all such disparate groups on one platform? For, they were all known to be staunch supporters of their own parties. No such partyman would be trusted by the people of other parties.

"My desire is that this role should be played by someone from among us. About our people, who are currently in politics, the general view of outsiders would naturally be that they belong to a particular party. So none of them would be able to discharge this responsibility. Now you are an M. P. and you do not belong to any party. Now you can easily and naturally come into contact with senior leaders. You will be able to conduct yourself on a footing of equality with the leaders of all parties.

"For this task - in which I expect from you to succeed — It is necessary that you should have a non-party image. Only then will the various leaders be able to establish personal relationships with you and trust you. For achieving this, will have to pay a heavy price. That price will be to completely avoid expressing yourself on controversial, explosive political issues and stick to other topics which, by comparison, would look minor ones and also would not bring you any publicity. It is possible that the ambition to make a name may arise in your heart. You possess the necessary qualities also. I would not blame you if you nurse such an ambition. I have placed the two options before you and you are completely free to choose either. I do not wish to give you any directive. I am saying all this because I want you to bear in mind my assessment of the situation."

Needless to say Thengadi unhesitatingly chose the option Shri Guruji expected of him. Nearly eleven years later when Emergency was declared in the country, Thengadi did play a vital role in consolidating the opposition. In particular, after the arrest of Shri Nanaji Deshmukh and later Shri Ravindra Verma during the anti-Emergency *Satyagraha*

launched by the Lok Sangharsh Samiti, the contacts Thengadi had forged during his tenure as a Rajya Sabha member came useful for keeping in close touch with the leaders of the Sangharsh Samiti as well as leaders of other parties like Chaudhary Charan Singh who had remained outside the prisons. The end-result of these contacts was the emergence of the Janata Party and fall of the dictatorial regime of Srimati Indira Gandhi. The selflessness Shri Dattopant Thengadi showed in treading the path Sri Guruji showed was a tribute to Shri Guruji's unerring selection.

Paternal Bereavement

Around this time a personal tragedy struck Shri Guruji in the form of the sudden demise of his father Bhauji due to a heart attack while in his sleep on July 20, 1954. He was then 82. Only three days before, on the 17th, Shri Guruji had left on a tour of Mahakoshal and Madhya Bharat. On getting the sad news on the 21st in Bhopal, Shri Guruji immediately returned to Nagpur. But before leaving Bhopal, he sent a message to Nagpur saying that the last rites be performed without waiting for his arrival. The funeral procession taken out in his absence was attended by thousands of Swayamsevaks and other citizens.

Shri Guruji reached Nagpur early in the morning of 22nd. His personal residence was in the Nagoba Lane, although he used to spend most of his time at the Sangh headquarters in Mahal. He used to go home only for his meals. After his meals and a brief talk interspersed with mirth and humor, Shri Guruji, would return to Karyalaya. The Swayamsevaks used to frequent his house regularly and were also looking after the needs of Bhauji and Tai. Tai too used to see her Madhu in every Swayamsevaks and would be lovingly hospitable to every one of them. Bhauji was by nature, loving solitude. On seeing her son, mother Tai broke down. Shri Guruji too was naturally grief - stricken, but he controlled himself. Sympathisers thronged the house and a large number of condolence messages were also received. After staying in Nagpur for five days Shri Guruji went to Nashik and performed his departed father's *Uttar Kriyas*. On August 7 he returned to Nagpur and resumed his tour on the 10th. Hardly had he time for grieving over his personal loss.

14 MISSION GREATER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL

Shri Guruji was 34 when he was entrusted with the responsibility of the country-wide organisation of the RSS dedicated to a historic national mission. He became so completely identified with the Sangh work that time flew and 16 years passed. The Sangh was spreading fast, and Shri Guruji came to be recognised as a well known all-Bharat leader. He was a powerful orator carrying the message of the Hindu Sanghatan and a patriot with a clear grasp of all social and political events.

Shri Guruji was now 51 and it was dicided to celebrate his birthday throughout the country. The ban on the Sangh and the massive country-wide Satyagraha for its removal had involved huge expenditure and the organisation was in debt, which was substantial enough to make the leadership worry a lot. The only way to pay off the debt was to utilise Shri Guruji's fifty-first birthday to hold public felicitations and present him with purse all over the country. But Shri Guruji was so averse to personal name, fame and publicity that it was an onerous task to get his consent for such an idea. On the other hand, the Swayamsevaks were only, quite eager to get an occasion to express their love and reverence for him by celebrating the occasion with due eclat and enthusiasm.

Unique Birthday Message

Shri Guruji would always insist that a Swayamsevak should totally identify himself with the organisation. He should nenver allow ego to dog his mind and should shun self-praise as poison. Shri Guruji has indeed moulded his own life accordingly. Because of his regorous practice in his day to day life, he had become an embodiment of *Karma Yoga*. There was thus a tussle between Shri Guruji's extreme reluctance on one hand and on the other the intense love and regard of lakhs of Swayamsevaks, as reflected in the urgings of some senior Sangh workers who out of their love for their leader had acquired a sort of right over him. Finally Shri Guruji relented and gave his consent. It was obvious that the funds so collected were to be used only for spreading the Cause of the Sangh.

The programme chalked out was in the form of a 51-day campaign

to be launched on Jan. 19, 1956. Swayamsevaks were to go from house to house and enlighten the people about Shri Guruji and the Sangh's ideology. Then they were to request contributions from them for that Cause. The Swayamsevaks plunged into the campaign with great enthusiasm.

After the anti-cow slaughter campaign of 1952, this was the first ever opportunity for the Sangh workers to conduct a mass contact movement on such a country-wide scale. A lot of literature, to suit the occasion were brought out; appeals, statements, newspaper articles, special issues, booklets and so on. Later Shri Nana Palkar took this opportunity to write a biography of Shri Guruji. All in all, Shri Guruji's name reverberated throughout the country in millions of homes and in public. People came to realise of young men, and who had the capacity to lead not only the Sangh but the whole country. The entire Bharat was, as if, waiting on its wings to witness the programmes to have Shri Guruji's darshan and listen to his captivating speech.

The fund collection drive also highlighted the fact that even outside the Sangh circles, there were innumerable people who held Shri Guruji in great esteem. The collection exceeded Rupees twenty lakhs.

Came *Vijaya Ekadashi,* Shri Guruji's birthday. From early morning Shri Guruji's household bustled with activity. All religious rites were duly performed such as *Puja,* Havan and the chanting of Mantras by the priests. An atmosphere of jubilation prevailed all round. When Shri Guruji touched mother Tai's feet the blessed him with tears of happiness, - but happiness tinged with sorrow, because Bhauji was not there to Share that joyous moment. It was indeed a sentimental moment beyond words.

With Taiji's permission photographs were also taken. In the evening, Shri Guruji proceeded to the Founder-Sarsanghachalak Dr. Hedgewar's Samadhi at Reshim Bagh and offered flowers there. The same day the first felicitation function was held. At many places all over the country also, religious ceremonies like *Satyanarayan Maha Puja, Havan, Mantras, Abhishek* etc. were performed on a large scale. Thousands of people also heartily joined the Swayamsevaks in these functions. There was a flood of letters and telegrams of congratulations and good wishes reaching Shri Guruji.

Committees and eminent citizens associated with them. Shri Guruji travelled for one full month to attend all such functions, which began in Nagpur on March 8 and concluded on April 8 in Delhi. In every state eminent dignitaries were requested to preside over the functions. In Nagpur noted historian and member of parliament Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherji and in Delhi Dr. Sita Ram former Bharatiya High Commissioner to pakistan presided over the functions. At other places too reputed scholars like Dr. Dhondo Keshav Karve and Shri Sonopant Dandekar graced the functions.

In his reply to the honour conferred upon him at the various programmes organised by countless men and women, who cherished great regard for the Sangh and himself, Shri Guruju said that as a person he was insignificant compared with the mighty organisation of Sangh, which was all supreme. At Nagpur Shri Guruji said with great humility and earnestness:

"The reports and articles in my praise that have appeared in the press during the recent days have indeed surprised me. How can one individual be ever given the credit for such a great organisation like the Sangh? Doubtless, countless workers have contributed to its growth. I am no doubt fortunate enough to be the object of your affection, but I do not deserve for my individual self all that credit. I also take it that the love you have expressed for me just means your love for the Sangh. I request you not only to love the Sangh but also to make it a part of your life. This is essential because the Sangh stands for the Nation, for the glory of *Bharat Mata*. The need of the hour is to reawaken the devotion for our holy motherland ingrained in the very depths of our hearts. This reawakened devotion would infuse our life with a spirit of selflessness and nobility of character in the cause of the nation. When the individual comes to possess these qualities then only all the plans for the nation's good will succeed. And that alone will build a mighty nation, and building up this might is the sole aim of the Sangh.

"Let us look at the conditions prevailing today in our country . Is our motherland united and integrated? Are we at least aware of the nature of our true nationhood? Does a nation mean merely a motley crowd of disparate groups? The Sangh has answered these basic questions even in its very start. The work of the Sangh transcends narrow personalities, provinces, sects, languages and castes. The

Sangh has no place for such different types of parochial loyalties. Its ideal is to bring all the people together on the common basis of love and reverence for the motherland and her culture. So the Sangh expects all of you to rise above all such dissensions and differences and come together on its unifying platform.

"The mission is far greater than the man. If a man thinks that a mission solely depends upon him it would be just meaningless ego. In this world, men may come and men may go, but what they achieve only remains. There are many people who are beset with the one worry-what after me? But in our society, there is no dearth at all of great, meritorious and intelligent people. If one recedes into the background or is no more, another will certainly take his place. After Dr. Hegdewar's passing away, we all have journeyed together in taking his mission forward. So my request to you is do not look to the man, look only to the mission.

"Workers may have told you these are Shri Guruji's thoughts or ideas. But in fact they are not mine at all. The hoary tradition of our country contains verily an ocean of knowledge. I have only taken on a just few drops from out of this ocean. Even an illiterate villager of this country is a born philosopher. He is the traditional possessor of the knowledge and philosophy that even amazes Western scholars and thinkers.

The edifice of the Sangh stands on the penance of thousands of selfless, dedicated workers. This is the source of Sangh's strength. The Sangh always thinks of the nation, and I just express that thought. I am nothing more than a gramophone.

"They thoughts of Sangh are not partisan, it only thinks of the nation and of the Hindu society at the high national level. You may work for any political party, but do not forget that you are very much an integral part of the Hindu society and an offspring of Bharat Mata. A hundred years ago the Congress was not there, but our nation was very much in existence. Parties, like individuals, come and go. No one is born in a particular party, he is born in a society. So our first duty is towards the society, the nation. And so, we should strive to infuse every moment of our life with the spirit of doing our duty towards our society.

"The work of the Sangh is to fostering national fellow feeling, and building character among our people. This is indeed a lifelong mission.

I call upon you to welcome and accept this divine ideology. What is important is the mission and its great relevance in our national context and not the mere individual who speaks about it. The Sangh earnestly seeks your co-operation in this holy task of building up a disciplined and organised national life in Bharat."

Thus did Shri Guruji respond to all the praise showered upon him everywhere. There was no trace of ego to be seen in his whole bearing or his speech. His conduct was as unaffected, as friendly and as unassuming as ever. He held that such occasional programmes may well have had a temporary purpose, but they should be put to the enduring purpose of expanding the cause of the daily Sangh work.

Shri Guruji himself paid special attention to expanding the Shakha network and keeping in constant touch with the workers at all levels. All other programmes he carried out were just in response to the urgent need of the circumstance and with the only purpose of expanding the work.

The felicitation functions of 1949 and the birthday celebrations of 1956 resulted in bringing both Shri Guruji and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh into the limelight of public attention and the whole country got on opportunity to get acquainted with the ideology. As a result the Sangh also became a new source of hope and confidence for the society at large. During the six years period till 1962, Shri Guruji was engrossed in expanding and strengthening the organisational network of the Sangh. Nothing special happened in his personal life.

Ambedkar Embraces Buddhism

On the *Vijaya Dashami* day of 1956, an event took place that left an enduring impact on the life of the society. It was indeed nothing less than a social upheaval. On that day lakhs of *vanchit bandhus* i.e. deprived section of our society led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar embraced Buddhism. While the annual *Vijaya Dashami* function of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was taking place at the Patvardhan grounds in the Dhantoli area of Nagpur, just five kilometers away, on the Deeksha Bhoomi, the Mahar brethren were accepting initiation into Buddhism under the leadership of Ambedkar.

It is not that those who embraced Buddhism had severed their connections with Hindu tradition and culture. For, the Buddhists are very much a part of the Hindu Society, a small part of that comprehensive

Hindu life. Since the time Ambedkar announced his resolve to change his religion along with his caste- brethren, Christian and Islamic religious leaders were making hectic efforts to take this community into their fold. But Ambedkar sternly refused all such offers and embraced Buddhism. He also declared that he had once told Mahatma Gandhi that though he differed from him on the issue of untouchability, when the time came: "I will choose only the least harmful way for the country. And that is the greatest benefit I am conferring on the country by embracing Buddhism; for Buddhism is a part and parcel of Bharatiya culture. I have taken care that my conversion will not harm the tradition of the culture and history of this land." [`Dr. Ambedkar' by Dhananjay Keer P-498].

For centuries these so-called untouchables had suffered grave social injustice and insults. Many agitations, struggles and debates had been carried out to end these evils but they had made no difference and the social conscience had remained unmoved. A limb of the Hindu society wanted to break away, but the rest of the Hindu society did not seem to care.

According to the Constitution of Bharat, untouchability had been declared a cognisable offence, but in actual practice it has continued. The deprived sections were still looked down upon and insulted. It is clear that as a reaction to this injustice only that Dr. Ambedkar had decided to leave the traditional Hinduism and this decision resulted in the *Deekshā* ceremony. This event at least was supposed to awaken the Hindu society to the urgent need to wash away the blemish of untouchability. Unfortunately, it did not happen. What was Shri Guruji's reaction to such an important event? Since he looked at every problem solely on the touchstone of overall national harmony and unity the idea of mass conversions was totally an anathema to him. He simply did not believe in such idea. In an article in the weekly Panchjanya, in November 1956 on the subject he wrote: "Is such mass conversion ever possible in any true religion? Every individual going in for conversion should first be able to evaluate the spiritual, moral and practical ideals of his original religion or faith and also the one he is going to embrace. Such a conversion involves a basic change in his perception of all the social spheres as well. Is such a fundamental and comprehensive change possible in mass conversions?"

At the same time, Shri Guruji was well aware of Dr. Ambedkar's greatness. In an article on him seven years after his *Dharma Chakra Pravartana* Shri Guruji wrote:

"Swami Vivekanada who had shaken the whole world with the resounding call of the divine message of Bharatiya Dharma and Sanskriti had declared that he saw God only in his poor, weak and down-trodden fellow-countrymen. Serving such suffering humanity, raising their levels of temporal life and elevating their spiritual vitality was indeed the true service to God. Vivekananda had also condemned the atrocious practices associated with untouchability and called for the building up of a harmonious society. These were the same sentiments that Dr. Ambedkar had also expressed in different words, quite pungently though in the political and social context. He performed the unique task of raising a large section of the society that was rotting in ignorance and misery and restored to it its self-respect. Our nation is deeply indebted to Dr.Ambedkar, and it is difficult to discharge this debt.

Swami Vivekananda had said that the emancipation of Bharat needs the razor-like intelligence of a Shri Sankaracharya and the limitless compassion of a Bhagwan Buddha. By accepting and advocating Buddhism Dr. Ambedkar, who himself reflected these qualities in an ample measure provided the inspiration to strive for the fulfillment of this guidance of Vivekananda. And he also felt that the inspiration to serve humanity by invoking the Buddhist tenets of equality and compassion was necessary for the good of the nation as also of mankind.

"Lord Buddha had struck blows at contemporary wrong and perverted ideas and had tried to reform the society and purify the prevailing form of Dharma, but never to break away from it. In the present times, Dr. Ambedkar also spent his life in working for strengthening the society and purifying its faith. I do believe he had no intention of breaking away from the society and creating a separate sect. In this respect I look upon him as a devoted follower of Lord Buddha in the present context and pay my respects to his sacred memory."

Gandhiji too had made praiseworthy efforts to eradicate untouchability. In 1932 he had gone on a fast unto death to set at naught the British machinations aimed at separation the untouchables from the Hindu society. In 1933, he had also launched a countrywide anti-untouchability agitation. But despite all this, the problem has remained unsolved.

Shri Guruji's stand, i.e., of the Sangh, has to be viewed in this context. The Sangh has adopted a way of its own for a healthy and enduring social transformation. The Sangh believes that reforming the society cannot be done by disparaging it or by considering ancient traditions worthless, or by just attacking various differences in the society. This would only accentuate conflicts and bitterness rather than bring about a unity of minds, and encourage separatism.

Therefore the Sangh has put forth the view point that all are Hindus and all of them share the same common cultural, social and spiritual tradition. We are all one, we must behave with everybody with this sense of oneness and stop thinking and talking in terms of high or low in any form whatsoever. Shri Guruji presented an example of this oneness in his actual practice also.

An event of 1950. A training camp of Sangh was in progress. The Swayamsevaks were sitting in rows for the noon meals. A particular group of Swayamsevaks was given the task of serving. But one of them looked hesitant to do the serving. Even when Shri Guruji asked him about it he remained silent. On learning that he was a Chamar. Shri Guruji got up, placed the pot of food in that Swayamsevak's hands, and said, 'serve me first'. In a moment the Swayamsevak overcame all his reluctance and forgot the centuries-old caste differences. With a new and happy realisation of social oneness he set to the task allotted to him. This was the practical, positive way of the Sangh - the way of sinking differences in the common flow of love and fellow feeling. In the Sangh, this method has proved singularly successful, but on the various levels of the society the process is yet to be completed.

With the Burmese Leader

A judge of the Burmese Supreme Court, Shri U Chan Tun, had visited Bharat in December 1958. He was in Delhi as a delegate to the World Buddhist Conference. He met Shri Guruji and got acquainted with the wide-ranging scope of the Sangh work. He also wanted to meet the neo-Buddhists; so, in addition to Delhi he visited Agra, Mumbai, Pune, Nasik, Auragabad, Nagpur etc. He held detailed discussions with Shri Guruji, visited the Sangh Shakha and also addressed some Sangh programmes. The point he made in all his talks was that *Sanātana Dharma* was comprehensive and Lord Buddha too had preached the same. It should be the Sangh's mission to again spread the light of

Sanatana Dharma throughout the world. "I hope that in times to come the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh will accomplish the task of spreading the message of *Sanātana Dharma* in the whole of South-East Asia also."

The distinguished visitor also attended the Sangh's *Makar Sankranti* function in Mumbai and attentively listened to Shri Guruji's speech. Later on the two met at Shri Guruji's residence and Tilgul distributed. The discussion centered round the need of Hindus and Buddhists to work unitedly and in an organised manner for the preservation and propagation of Dharma and Sanskriti in South-East Asia.

He also addressed public meetings of neo-Buddhists in Mumbai and Nagpur. He, being the President of 'World Felloship of Buddhists', the Boudha Mandali organised his speeches every where. In his speech, at Nagpur he advised them to adopt the Sangh method of work of inculcation of values of right living. Addressing selected group of Sangh workers, at the Sanghachalak's residence, he expressed his faith in the ultimate success of Sangh work and his happiness at his meeting with Shri Guruji. In Madras too, he addressed a function organised by the Sangh in his honour.

When at the time of his departure for Shri Lanka, press reporters asked him about his impressions of Bharat and if he had a message to give his replies clearly indicated the impact that his discussions with Shri Guruji and the close look at Sangh work, had left on him. He said "Before coming to Bharat I was under the impression that in ancient times Bharat used to send religious missionaries to other countries but now it did not possess that inner strength. But during my travels in this country I had the good fortune of meeting many such devoted workers as well as participating in many such programmes. Now I have concluded that Bharat still has that unique potency. I have met many workers who have dedicated themselves completely and selflessly to the service of the Society and Dharma. Their learning and capacity are also of a very high order. I have no doubt, they will come forward to discharge their duty to the welfare of the world. Without doubt the advice to the neo-Buddhists to co-operate with the Sangh without falling prey to political ends and to keep Buddhism within the all-encompassing embrace of *Sanatana Dharma* was the result of his meeting with Shri Guruji.

Message to the American People

In 1960, Bharatiya Jana Sangh leader, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee (then an M.P. also) was invited to visit the U.S.A. It was the time of the presidential election there with John Kennedy and Richard Nixon facing each other. Shri Vajpayee is an old Swayamsevak and had also been a pracharak. When he told Shri Guruji about the proposed visit it was decided to send with him a message to the American people. The idea was for Shri Vajpayee to read it out in an important public programme. This was a part of Shri Guruji's effort to re-establish the greatness of *Sanatana Dharma* in the modern world. Shri Vajpayee read out the message in an impressive function held in Washington on 28th September 1960. In the message Shri Guruji said:

"It is not an accident, but Divine Dispensation, it seems, that Swami Vivekananda proclaimed the Universal Gospel as manifested in the life of his Master-Bhagwan Shri Ramakrishna first in the U.S.A., the youngest and, therefore, the most virile of the peoples believing in the freedom and dignity of man. By force of world events the U.S.A. has emerged as the leader of the free world and it can successfully discharge the great responsibility by recalling the Swami's prophetic words and striving to live up to them.

"The world is torn into two sections, desperately trying to establish supremacy over all the people. The conflict is not of Democracy versus Communism as it appears to superficial observers. It is the age-old struggle between gross materialism and Dharma. Communism stands for the former and tries to manifest itself as an Universal ideology. It can be countered not by sectarian religious dogmas but only by Universal Religion (Sanatana Dharma), Where in all sectarian religions come to an understanding and find concord and ultimate fulfillment. It is not a negation of personal beliefs but a sublimation of them into something higher, real and Universal. This alone is a world ideology with a common appeal, which, backed with right conduct, correct policies and indomitable determination to fight the forces of destructive materialism that can lead the free world to ultimate success over the growing menace of what is called Communism.

"The present day Bharat may not be as prosperous materially as some other countries, but despite its many vicissitudes of life, it had held firmly to this Universal Gospel of *Advaita* and is once again

standing on its feet and finding its mission in life to supply this world ideology to the free peoples and thus help them to victory in the present crisis enveloping the world.

"May the people of the U.S.A. remember the clarion call of Swami Vivikananda, join with Bharat in bonds of inviolable friendship and victory to the forces of Dharma is assured; the world will be freed interminable wars and peace and prosperity descend upon Man."

A Camp for Significant Guidance

An important camp of leading pracharaks was held in Indore in March 1960. Which was bigger than the one at Sindi in 1954. It was attended by vibhag level workers as well as by prominent workers engaged in other fields of national activity. The purpose of the camp was to review the Sangh work over the previous six years, to resolve the doubts in the minds of workers and to chalk out future expansion plans.

It was now 35 years since the Sangh was founded. There were many ups and downs during this period and also many crises. So this camp was a sort of open session. Shri Guruji was no doubt present throughout all the sittings. There were also discussions in addition to Shri Guruji's discourses. He provided guidance by way of answering questions posed by the workers.

It was Shri Guruji's nature to have free and frank discussions in such camps. It was the most effective transparent way to forge a consensus. The point he made in his speeches at the camp was that however adverse the prevailing circumstances one should be committed to one's duty towards the society and the country all the time. Clarifying that the work of the Sangh was of two types, daily and occasional, he emphasised that the programme of the daily Shakha must not be allowed to slacken on any account. It was absolutely essential to conduct the daily Shakha and carry on its various aspects of character-moulding. Experience had also proved that it was the most dependable means of saving the country from every kind of adverse situation.

Another special feature of the speeches was, Shri Guruji's insistence on awakening the nation's innate vitality which was quite impossible without leading one's life in accordance with the great values of Hindu Dharma and samskriti and inculcation of Hindu samskaras. He also

clearly explained what these samskaras are. In the context of revival of Hindu culture, which the so-called intellectuals mischievously misconstrue as revival of the varna system. Shri Guruji clarified the Sangh's stand on two such aspects : The first was, does it mean the revival of the Varna System? And the second was, should the Varna System be considered an inevitable and integral part of Hindu social life? Shri Guruji's reply was clear cut and unambiguous: revival of the Varna system is not at all linked with cultural revival. We neither oppose caste nor support it. We are aware that this system played an important role at a critical time in maintaining the life fabric of our society intact. If the society does not need it anymore it will wither away and no one need feel sorry for it. Similarly the Varna system is not a permanent state of society, but just a social system. If it has lost its utility now no one should hesitate to give it up. A system can be changed and does change to suit the needs, convenience and utility for the society.

Being a highly spiritually oriented person himself, Shri Guruji could explain the form and content of Sangh work in spiritual terms also and call upon the workers in that light to sacrifice more and more in a spirit of joyous fulfillment of life. The speeches also encouraged the workers to undertake self-introspection. Needless to say, Shri Guruji's guidance proved most effective and relevant to the stage through which the Sangh was passing.

Indeed, for the Sangh 1960 proved to be a significant year of the post-independence period. Besides warning of a possible Chinese aggression Shri Guruji pointed out the visible signs of many impending crises and social challenges. He inspired the workers in the Indore Camp with the words, Our tradition has given us the strength to overcome even the most awesome adversity. So if we dedicate our lives to the fulfillment of Bharat's global mission we will certainly be successful." The camp was concluded, the workers returned to their places with renewed vigour and conviction. Surprisingly enough, exactly after two years Shri Guruji's assessment came true and there was a massive foreign aggression on our country.

15 THE EARLY SIXTIES

The final rites of the founder of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Dr. Hedgewar had been performed at the Reshim Bagh ground in Nagpur. An ordinary small *samādhi* had been built at the spot where his body was consigned to the flames.

The Sangh had grown and expanded fast since then and Swayamsevaks from all over the country used to come for the darshan of the holy *samādhi*. It was therefore thought proper that if a temple like memorial was built at the site it would serve as a source of inspiration for Swayamsevaks and others as well. So, a `Dr. Hedgewar Memorial Committee' was set up with Shri Guruji as its Chairman.

A Fitting Memorial

Funds were collected and the Memorial duly built. Shri Guruji took keen interest in the construction. This time a new aspect of his all-round personality came to light - not only his knowledge of Vastu-shastra, the Hindu science of architecture, but his aesthetic sense and his unique insight into the type of design suited to the *Smriti Mandir* as well. From the engineer to the sculptor, he guided one and all.

The Memorial, *Smriti Mandir,* was inaugurated on the auspicious day of Varsha Pratipada, April 9, 1962. It was also Doctorji's birth anniversary. As Swayamsevaks from all over the country had reverentially contributed to the memorial fund it was decided to celebrate the inauguration on an all-Bharat level.

When the question of selecting an eminent spiritual figure to inaugurate the *Smriti Mandir* came up, the name of revered *Paramacharya* of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha naturally came up as the most proper one. As is well known, the *Paramacharya* had great love for Sangh and we also knew how deep Shri Guruji's reverence for him was. When the request was conveyed to the *Paramacharya,* he readily agreed and said that he would be starting about two months ahead, so that he would be able to cover the distance by foot and reach Nagpur by the appointed time. Shri Guruji knew that the Paramacharya would traverse by foot only, but did not want to put him under so much of

physical strain. So Shri Guruji informed him accordingly and requested him to send the *Mantrakshta* as his ashirvad, which would be sprinkled on the Samadhi signifying its inauguration as sanctified by that seer himself.

On the great day, thousands of Swayamsevaks and citizens thronged the venue of Reshim Bagh from morning till night. The Memorial was a magnificent creation, laid with red and black marble slabs, and on this day it was tastefully decorated with flowers and electric bulbs. It was also such as to induce introspection in the visitor's mind. As he gaze on the exquisite statue of Doctorji sitting in a semi-circular chair he would feel that he was looking at the likeness of a latter-day seer, a harbinger of a resurgent Hindu Nation. Throughout the day, a sea of humanity surged all over the place.

The function had been organised on a truly grand scale. Everything was meticulously planned, and the whole affair was marked by typical RSS discipline. Everyone was eager to listen to Shri Guruji. He started his speech saying, "The erection and inauguration of the *Smriti Mandir* does not at all mean that we are hero-worshippers. For the Sangh, its founder is the most revered person. But we have never raised slogans in his name nor glorified him. Only God, our Nation and motherland are to be worshipped, glorified, but no individual.

"However a common man needs a symbol, a focal point of inspiration for pondering over principle. Inspiring memories of a person who had himself become one with the principle aids such thinking. Doctorji gave us a unique methodology for the revival of the nation and placed before us his own life example of burning patriotism-transparently lean and blemishless. His life itself has proved a source of undying inspiration for thousands of young Swayamsevaks. The *Smriti Mandir* has been built in order to keep the memory of that dedicated life alive in the heart of one and all."

On the morning of April 10, 1962, Shri Guruji addressed the Swayamsevaks who had assembled from all over country. He said:

"Do not make this *Smriti Mandir* a mere place of formal worship. True worship should take the form of our efforts to become like him whom we revere. We must mould our lives accordingly and with the ideals placed before us by Doctorji. The Mandir has not been built to

establish like a Math for a Mahant. I have no interest in a structure built out of mere brick and mortar. We must look upon it as a source of life-long inspiration for our own lives."

One point needs to be noted here. Shri Guruji had taken a prominent part in building the Memorial, and Swayamsevaks from all over the country had been invited for the inauguration. But the thoughts which must have crossed his mind with regard to himself are well indicated in one of his very last three letters. He wrote, "Apart from the founder of the Sangh who placed before us an ideal and a life example which had become one with that ideal, there is no reason to glorify anyone else or to put up any memorial to such a one."

It was obvious that Shri Guruji did not want any kind of memorial to himself after he was no more. He did not want Reshim Bagh to be turned into a venue of memorials. However, this indirect instruction of Shri Guruji was counter-balanced by the depth of love and reverence that lakhs of Swayamsevaks felt for him. So after his passing away, his life of self sacrifice and self-abnegation was symbolised by an electrified *Yagna Kund* constructed in front of Doctorji's memorial. Shining white by day, this *Yagna Kund* lights up at night with artificial flames thrown up by concealed wiring, providing a unique remembrance of the unity of the life-patterns of the two great dedicated souls.

Shri Guruji had absolutely no personal life to call his own. His only bond with his family was mother Tai. Father Bhauji had passed away in 1954. After his father's death, Shri Guruji remained keenly sensitive towards the feelings of the mother. But Tai too was aware that instead of accepting the bondage of a personal family life, her son had accepted the responsibility of the nation considering it as a wider family. Now she did not have just one son, Madhu. Now all the Swayamsevaks of the Sangh were her own children.

Unique Meeting Point

Whenever Shri Guruji was in Nagpur one item formed an unfailing part of his daily routine. After attending the prayer at the Mohite Shakha he would walk down to his residence in Nagoba Lane in the company of prominent workers and Swayamsevaks from out of town, if any. Tai would be waiting for the party on the veranda downstairs. Shri Guruji would sit by her side, and then there would be a session

of light talk and banter under Tai's chairmanship. Shri Guruji had a wonderful sense of humour. His jokes would never hurt anybody and would always had a lesson in it.

One day a Swayamsevak came to meet him, bringing his wife along with him. Earlier the same day, Shri Guruji had visited his place, but he had gone out. His father had told him that his son had gone to the movie. In the course of the chitchat, the topic of economic hardship and *Guru Dakshina* came up. Shri Guruji asked the newly married Swayamsevak, "What is the price of a cinema ticket these days? If the wife is with you, you cannot purchase a lower class ticket. Then there is the expenditure on transportation as well as refreshments. At the rate of one film a month what would be the expenditure for the year? And then the only economy to be effected will be in respect of *Guru Dakshina.* Is it not?"

The Swayamsevak understood what was meant, and so did everyone else present there. There were many such incidents, in which a variety of topic came up like the importance of the daily Shakha, the behaviour of the Swayamsevaks and the manifestation of *samskaras,* the place of Shakha in one's daily life and so on. It looked as if Shri Guruji had made these chat-and-tea sessions into an effective medium of moulding of workers. These meetings also showed Tai's deep love for Shri Guruji on the one hand and Shri Guruji's equally ardent reverence for her.

During her terminal illness Tai suffered a paralytic stroke. Her condition had turned delicate. At the time, Shri Guruji had to leave on his tour. He asked her, 'May I go?' She said, 'No'. The next day she felt somewhat better and gave him permission. During his travels, Krishnarao Mohrir kept him posted constantly with the condition of her health. Shri Guruji had assured her that her end would not come when he was not by her side. Whenever Tai was very ill, Shri Guruji stayed in Nagpur. He would sit by her side all day, talk to her, and give her courage. After Tai's passing away that unique *samskar kendra* on the veranda also came to a close. Thereafter, Shri Guruji would stay at the Karyalaya. Visitors would call there and meetings would go on till late at night.

Till Tai was alive, whether or not Shri Guruji was in Nagpur, Swayamsevaks kept visiting his home. Tai was a mother for all of them. Not one, but many Madhavs used to visit that house. Tai inquired after

all of them. On August 12, 1962 this mother not only of Shri Guruji but of countless Swayamsevaks breathed her last. No doubt, Tai was aged and tired, still she provided an umbrella of limitless love over Shri Guruji. It was from her that Shri Guruji would draw his strength and solace for his continuous countrywide tours. For him, she was providing the perennial shade of coolness amidst all the heat and strain of difficulties and dangers confronting the Sangh from time to time.

Before leaving for tour, he would always touch her feet, and seek her blessing. So Tai's death made a grievous impact on Shri Guruji. Naturally enough the flame of renunciation again got quickened in his mind. He again wanted to retreat into the solitude of the Himalayas. Amitabh Maharaj, Shri Guruji's elder *Guru Bandhu,* was in Nagpur at the time of Tai's demise, and recalled what Swami Akhandananda had once told him. To dissuade Shri Guruji from renouncing the world Amitabh Maharaj told him "The Sangh's work is still incomplete. For its sake you will have to go back to your room at the Karyalaya. For its sake you will have to go back to your room at the Karyalaya. Your *sādhanā* should take place not in the lap of the Himalayas but in that room itself. I shall myself stay at the Karyalaya, and you should come with me." At Amitabh Maharaj's urging Shri Guruji went to the Karyalaya.

It seems Akhandananda, before his death, had cautioned Amithabh Maharaj about Shri Guruji's future life. He had warned, "It appears he will work with Dr. Hedgewar. He will selflessly serve the society. Once in a while he may well have an intense urge to return to the Himalayas. On such occasions you should keep an eye on him. There is no harm in going to Badrikashrama and have the darshan of the divine Himalayas. But if he wants to live in solitude in its lap it will be your responsibility to dissuade him." Amitabh Maharaj had ably discharged this responsibility.

Around the same time, Shri Guruji received a letter of condolence from the Kanchi Kamakoti Sahnkaracharya the *Paramacharya* which greatly soothed his disturbed feelings and helped it to return to Sangh work. The *Paramacharya* wrote, "The mortal frame of your mother is no more. But Bharat Mata is the mother of countless worthy sons like you. She has been like this since times immemorial and will continue to be so till eternity. Since you have dedicated yourself in her selfless

service, there can be no bereavement of Mother for you at all."

Needless to say, Shri Guruji gave up the idea of going to the Himalayas. When the intense longing for renunciation had subsided, he again merged himself in the Sangh work. Now no other personal bond had remained in his life. Whenever such an occasion arose he would make a most touching reference to *Paramacharya's* letter.

The Chinese Aggression

1962 proved to be an extremely traumatic year for Bharat. In October of that year, China invaded her. It was a most shocking experience for our people. Nearly a decade before, Shri Guruji had prophesied such a possibility. The people and the powers that be had no idea that such a thing would ever happen. So for them it came as a bolt from the blue. As early as 1951, Shri Guruji had issued a statement to the press at Shimoga in Karnataka in which he had said, "China is expansionist by nature and there is every possibility of the Chinese committing an aggression on Bharat in the near future." This warning was in the context of China's military action in Tibet.

In those days, Shri Guruji had repeatedly warned that Bharat had committed a monumental blunder in handing over Tibet to China on a silver platter as it were. He said, the Government of Bharat was displaying such shortsightedness that the British had taken extreme care to avoid. In particular, he would often say that in the wake of the Communist revolution in China we should be on guard against the fifth columnists here who are hand in glove with the Communist aggressors.

In an article in 'Panchjanya' (18-5-59) he had warned that not Bharat alone but the whole of Asia should remain ever vigilant. Naturally, the Bharat-China conflict formed the main topic in Shri Guruji's press meet in Maharashtra held on April 2, 1962 and again in his public speech at Ram Lila grounds in Delhi on Dec. 23, 1962. In Delhi he said, 'I regret to say that despite repeated warnings, the Government preferred is ignore such a grave possibility. For nearly two months, the Chinese had been committing aggression on our soil and now the Government accepts that there has been an aggression. Actually, this aggression is 10 to 12 years old. Even an ordinary person like me had, nearly ten years ago, referred to the systematic efforts the Chinese were making to enter our territory and entrench themselves

in it. Some other knowledgeable people also had warned about this. But our leaders were so lost in the goody goody slogans of world-fellowship, *Hindi-Cheeni Bhai Bhai, Punch Sheela* and all that they did not even think of addressing themselves to so serious a problem as this.

For Pt. Nehru, it did come as a very big shock of disillusion. Later on he exclaimed "China has brought us down to earth from the world of dreams that we had created." Bharat began giving China concession after concession in order to appease it. When China committed the atrocity of the annexation of Tibet, a very friendly nation and strategically so highly important for our security, we not only did not resist the aggression, we betrayed it by calling it 'a region of China'. The Chinese aggression in Ladakh was kept a closely guarded secret for a long time, and when China overran 12,000 sq. miles of our territory and the whole thing came to light it was argued that 'not a blade of grass' grew there anyway. The very same Chinese leaders whom we embraced with the slogan *Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai* had cut our throat. Finally, the Chinese aggression woke up the Government to reality. But the infamy stuck. The pitiable condition of our defence-preparedness was pitifully exposed. Especially the Tezpur event shamefully highlighted the Government's decayed mental condition.

When the Chinese overran our territory right upto Bomdila in Arunachal Pradesh and began to move downhill towards Chardwar and Misamari, the morale of the entire Government machinery collapsed. Some of its topmost officers, including the deputy commissioner, fled to safer places after advising the public also to do likewise. The doors of the Jail and the lunatic asylum were thrown into a nearby pond. The then revenue Minister of Assam Shri Fakruddin Ali Ahmed, expressed his helplessness before the NCC cadets and also ordered to dynamite the powerhouse.

The same night Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Prime minister of Bharat, uttered those fateful words, "My heart goes out to the people of Assam." The message was loud and clear. The Govt. at Delhi had abdicated its responsibility to save Assam at any cost and had left to the tender mercies of the enemies. Even to this day, the people of Assam have not forgotten that infamous sentence of Pandit Nehru and feel that the Government of Bharat would, at any similar future development, let them down badly. Such was the utter misfortune and shame of

Bharat to have had such an unmanly leadership at such a crucial hour.

It goes to the credit of some Swayamsevaks like Kanu Deka, Padam Pd. Das and Padmaja Kant Senapati and their friends, who formed a group of youths and contacted the military authorities and with their help kept up night and day vigil to protect the abandoned houses from being looted by Bangladeshi infiltrators. They also saw to it that the money dumped in to the pond was saved from the hands of anti-nationals who were approaching the venue with their bullock carts. On the other hand people from the public like Poorna Narayan Singh, Dr. Das, Harkant Das, Vishwa Dev Sharma and also the Municipal President Shri Dulal Bhattacharya and some others formed a provisional committee and decided that they would not accept defeat and will provide leadership through a paralled government.

The chinese aggression had unnerved the Government in Delhi and filled it with fear. But a short time later, China declared a unilateral ceasefire. During this period in every speech he made all over the country, Shri Guruji's suicidal policy, and the urgent and paramount need to build up a strong and self reliant nation. He argued that not only should we be able to resist aggression but we should prepare ourselves to liberate Tibet also in order to safeguard the Himalayan range, which has been our natural defence all along.

During these speeches, Shri Guruji would also dwell on topics like the Communist regime in China, the unclear relationship between Russia and China, the treacherous role of the Bharatiya Communists, the hollowness of China's friendship with Pakistan, the need for very close relationship with Nepal and for staying non-aligned in international politics on the basis of our own strength and so on. He even went to the extent of saying that if the leaders lacked courage to face the situation they should step down and hand over power to those equipped with the necessary martial spirit and grit.

Even while criticising like this Shri Guruji also appealed to the people to co-operate with the Government in all its war efforts. He always ended his speeches with this fervent appeal. He issued a public appeal also on 20-10-1962 in this regard.

In the light of Shri Guruji's guidance, right from the moment of Chinese invasion, the Swayamsevaks plunged into the task of mobilising

people's resources to the war-effort and building up their morale. Even Pandit Nehru had to recognise the value of these timely efforts and he arranged to invite the Sangh Swayamsevaks also to participate in the People's Route March on the 1963-Republic Day, and had even overruled objections by some of the Congressmen in that connection. Needless to say, the smart turn out of 3,000 youths in RSS uniform marching to the tune of the Sangh-trained band, formed a star attraction of that day's parade.

Shri Guruji never failed to stress upon the necessity for acquisition of enduring invincible national strength. He said, a mere temporary upsurge of enthusiasm could not safeguard the nation's security and freedom permanently. Bitterly criticising the Communist slogan 'Strengthen Nehru's hands' he once remarked : "First strengthen his heart, then his hands would automatically become strong." He never believed that the mere mouthing of slogans of peace or showing unilateral friendly gesture of sending 'soldiers of peace' would solve the problem of China's aggression. Refuting the utterly futile policy of unilateral peace and friendship he would make a very perceptive analysis of Chinese history, temperament, intolerance and inhuman cruelty.

Even after the cease fire of 1962, covert Chinese incursions continued. The Bharatiya territory overrun by the Chinese continued to remain under their control. To this date the Government has no firm idea about regaining it. Talks about strengthening Sino-Bharat friendship are also loudly mouthed. The talk of liberating Tibet from China's clutches is, however, heard no more.

Bharat gave the Dalai Lama political asylum, but he was not given the freedom to make efforts from the Bharatiya base for the liberation of Tibet. Bharat could do nothing to undo Chinese machinations. Before their very eyes Government saw our frontiers contracting, but did nothing to stop it. On the other hand, China not only took its place in the comity of nuclear-weapons states but began to be looked upon by the world as another big power in addition to Russia. Recognising all this Shri Guruji's urgings began ringing all the more powerful. He could not tolerate even a shadow of inferiority complex at the national level of leadership. He appealed to the manly spirit of the people and suggested to the Government to consolidate the people's power on a

non-party basis. But the Government paid no heed to him on any of these vital aspects.

The one good thing which came out of all this situation was that the Central leaders realised the inherent weakness of our security arrangements, as a result of which Krishna Menon was made to resign from his Defence Minister's post. Special attention came to be paid to the preparedness of the army, which in turn helped in the smashing of the Pakistani aggression in 1965.

Strengthening Ties With Nepal

By a happy coincidence, Shri Guruji went to Kathmandu for the *darshan* of Lord Pashupathinath on the *Shivaratri* day, January 26, 1963, and it was in the fitness of things that he should call on the King of Nepal, Mahendra Vikram Shah and offer his respects. The then Prime Minister of Nepal Shri Tulsi Giri was also present on the occasion. It was, in fact, beacuse of Dr. Giri that the Sangh workers did not have any problem in fixing up the engagement, as he had come into close contact with the Sangh during his student days in Darbhanga in Bihar and later on in Calcutta. As the Nepal King was free to go anywhere in Bharat for religious and cultural purposes, Shri Guruji very much desired that he should participate in the work of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and also get closely acquainted with the work of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which was engaged in organising the Hindus in Bharat on the cultural basis.

This meeting lasted for about an hour in a very cordial atmosphere. In those days Bharat-Nepal relations had developed some serious strains. Because of Bharat's dismal defeat at the hands of China, Nepal's relations with Bharat had come under a cloud, and it had begun to lean more towards China. It also nursed the grouse that miscreants trouble within its borders were taking shelter in Bharat. The Nepal King had also come to feel that Nehru had no love lost for Nepal since it had declared itself officially as a Hindu Kingdom. Shri Guruji ardently desired that Nepal and Bharat should come closer as they shared the same religious and culturals traditions spoke to the King towards that end. As the King responded favorably to the idea Shri Guruji requested that the King should visit Bharat to attend a function of the Sangh. The King happily agreed and Shri Guruji assured him

that his acceptance would be conveyed to the Government leaders at Delhi. Home Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was scheduled to visit Kathmandu on March 1, 1963. Shri Guruji requested the King to have a frank talk with him with a view to strengthening friendly relations between the two countries. Sri Guruji then expressed his desire that the King should attend a function of the Sangh so that he could personally see the work it was doing. The King too acceded to the request. The meeting concluded on a very happy note.

Immediately on returning to Banaras, Shri Guruji wrote to Shri Shastri and Pt. Nehru about his meeting with the Nepal King and his assessment of the situations. In his letter to Shri Shastri Shri Guruji wrote:

"If we improve our relations with Nepal, accord it due respect, strengthen our friendly ties with it and take into consideration its educational, economic and other requirements, that country could indeed become our strong and dependable ally and a defender of our borders. As all our interests are closely interrelated it is also necessary from our own security point of view to establish sincere and friendly ties between the two. The bitterness that has developed between the two countries, because of the apathetic and insensitive attitude, either deliberate or unintended, of Bharatiya officials should be removed, and if necessary such officials be replaced by more sensitive officials. I have no doubt you will take all these factors into consideration and succeed in putting Bharat-Nepal relations on a firm and friendly footing.

Shri Guruji expressed similar sentiments in his letter to Nehru also. In his letter, he not only wrote about normalising Bharat-Nepal relations but also about China and the Communist schemes of expansionism. He added, "I do not think the Government of Nepal is very much inclined towards China. And it is positively averse to the imperialistic attitude of international Communism. Hence Nepal can become a strong force against Chinese expansionism, but we in Bharat must help it in every possible way. It is necessary to create confidence in the Nepalese mind about our policies and objectives towards Nepal." Nehru promptly responded to this letter on March 1, agreeing with most of Shri Guruji's views. It must be noted that although there were differences in certain principles and perceptions between Shri Guruji and Nehru they also shared the generosity of mind to respect each other's thinking on issues of national interest.

Later in 1965, Shri Atal Bihari Vajapayee met Shri Shastri. In this meeting Shastri heartily praised Shri Guruji's purposeful Nepal visit. He said that Shri Guruji had already accomplished three-fourths of his task of strengthening Bharat-Nepal friendship by creating a conducive atmosphere there.

But this is not the end of the story of Shri Guruji's meeting with the King of Nepal. There was another less than pleasant aspect and such as to shown up the Bharatiya Government in no favouable light. In his meeting with Shri Guruji, the Nepal King had agreed to attend a function of the RSS. So the Sangh had earnestly started efforts to invite him to a function at the latter's convenience. In 1963, he was to be in Mumbai at the end of a foreign tour. So Sangh workers made elaborate plans to accord him a grand civic reception there. But the time was not suitable for the King, and the plan could not fructify. Later in 1964, the King was requested to be the Chief Guest at the Sangh's *Makar Sankrānti* function at Nagpur. But as Nehru was scheduled to visit Nepal among those days it was necessary for the King to stay in Kathmandu at that time.

Finally, the King was requested to attend the Sangh's Makar Sankranti function in Nagpur on January 14, 1965, and the King agreed. On receiving his consent in the beginning of December 1964, Shri Guruji went to Delhi in order to discuss the details of the King's programme with the President Dr. Radhakrishna and the Prime Minister. He met the President on Dec. 9, but could not meet the Prime Minister. Later the Nepal King informed Nagpur about his detailed programme. So Shri Guruji again went to Delhi. Again he was unable to see the Prime Minister. So he wrote a letter to him giving him full details of the King's programme. Receipt of the letter was acknowledged by the Foreign Ministry. In the meanwhile, Shri Guruji met Shri Vasantrao Naik, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, gave him detailed information about the King's programme and asked him in what way the State Government could extend its co-operation. The Chief Minister responded with the assurance that all arrangements would be made in accordance with the Central Government's instructions. Shri Guruji then left on his tour of Bihar from Dec. 25 to Jan. 5.

Around this time, some anti-Hindu leftist newspapers published highly critical reports about the Nepal King's proposed visit to the Sangh's functions. In the meanwhile, a statement of the Prime Minister

was also published in which he had claimed he had no knowledge that all of the King's visit. What an outright lie from the Prime Minister of the country! It became clear that the Congress Government did not like King Mahendra accepting the Sangh's invitation and visiting Bharat to attend the RSS function. On the other hand, Shri Guruji had publicly announced that the King of Nepal was to attend the Sangh's Makar Sankranti function in Nagpur. The city was all agog with joy and enthusiasm and various preparations for a royal welcome to the King were under way. But now the whole thing came to naught. The King expressed his inability to come as it would have been against international norms in view of the Government of Bharat's adverse attitude.

As a last resort Shri Guruji wrote an urgent letter to the President in which he said: "I trust you are aware of our work for strengthening our country's relations with Nepal. In view of the present disturbed conditions there it has become all the more necessary to further strengthen our traditional ties between our two countries."

But the letter was of no avail. The Government's opposition remained. What would have been a historic event not only for Nagpur but for the whole of Bharat proved a damp-squib. Along with the King's letter of regrets, which he sent through a special messenger, a copy of his speech for the function was also enclosed.

The King's Inspiring Message

Expressing deep regrets over his inability to be present at the function, The King wrote, 'You can well understand the mental anguish I, as a Hindu, feel because of my inability to be present on this auspicious occasion.

King Mahendra's message to the Hindus of Bharat spoke of the global role of Hinduism in general and of Nepal and RSS in particular and it was read out at the function:

"Nepal has ever been a source of perennial inspiration for the Hindus of India. Not only that, Nepal is proud of the fact that she has provided asylum for Hindus whenever they were in danger. Heroic commanders of the first Indian War of Independence like Nana Saheb Peshwa found shelter in Nepal... Nepal has always acted as a sentinel of India. Both have almost the same culture and both are animated by

the same ideal of life... This is a matter of joy for all of us Hindus and indeed a matter of glory for the entire Hindu world.

"The Hindu Religion is the most ancient religion of the world. It has the supreme knowledge of the texture of Creation. It has all the essential formula for achieving the peace, welfare and happiness of all mankind, as well as for eliminating all traces of conflict from the surface of the earth. Hinduism is a matter of pride and glory for all of us, the followers of the ancient, great and glorious Hindu Dharma.

"Unfortunately, humanity today is racing in the direction of destruction and is entangled in mutual hatred and conflict. The highest thoughts of Hindu Dharma alone can extricate man from this fearful situation. For this, it is essential for Hindus every where to become an united and indivisible force. It cannot be said that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has not been playing a useful role in this movement.

"We are naturally happy to know that this rally is engaged in giving a well-organised and disciplined form to the inhabitants of India in keeping with this truth. We Nepalese are the only independent and sovereign Hindu Kingdom of Nepal, representing in a sense the Hindus of the whole world, are also naturally desirous of co-operating with all such dynamic Hindu forces. We send our prayers to Lord Pashupatinath and Goddess Guhyeshwari to bless this righteous work and make ideal Hindu human life a positive reality."

Shri Guruji also explained the situation in his speech. He send that had the Nepal King attended the Sangh function the cultural ties between Bharat and Nepal would have been all the more strengthened. But the ruling party had placed selfish and narrow partisan end above national interest. Shri Guruji also issued a statement explaining the entire sequence of events.

Media Reaction

Many leading newspapers of the country came down heavily on the Government for preventing the King of Nepal from attending the RSS function.

The daily 'Hindustan' of Delhi wrote: "Does our Government expect friendship with Nepal by adopting a disdainful and apathetic attitude towards Hindutva when a majority of that country's population is

staunchly Hindu. This is like uprooting a tree and then expecting it to blossom."

The 'Vir Arjun' of Delhi wrote, 'It is highly surprising that the spokesmen of our Government can so shamelessly indulge in such an insulting lie (at first acceding to the Nepal King's programme and then indulging in a clean volte-face). Can our Government imagine how much the Gorkhas in our army must have been shocked at this discourtesy to their King?"

The 'Kesari' of Pune wrote, When the Pope visits Mumbai the entire Government machinery right from the President runs down to welcome him, but this same Government prevents the King of Nepal from visiting Nagpur. Is our Government bent upon taking revenge on the Hindu Society for some reason best known to itself?'

All these details have been recounted here just to show the depth to which the Congress leadership had sunk in its anti-Hindu attitude, and to what extent its considerations of political untouchability had taken it in its opposition to the Sangh. It did not stop short of even telling lies in public.

1965 War: Advocacy of Strategy of Offence

Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister of Bharat during the Bharat-Pak war of 1965. Pakistan had unleashed the war by entering the Chamb area of Kashmir. At that time, Shastri had appealed for everybody's co-operation and had included Shri Guruji in the All-Party Consultative Committee even though he was not connected with any political party.

The Committee held its meeting in Delhi. Shri Guruji was touring Maharashtra and was in Sangli at that time. When he was given the Prime Minister's message about the meeting, he immediately flew to Delhi. What transpired in the meeting and what role he played in it were disclosed by him for the first time when he addressed the Sangh workers engaged in different fields of activity on March 8, 1970. He said:

'In that meeting a certain gentlemen said "Let us first define our war aims". A certain leader also repeatedly kept on saying "Your army". Every time he said it, I interrupted him and suggested that he should say "our army". But when he spoke the same words for a third time, I said "What are you talking?" Then he realised his mistake and corrected himself by saying our army."

"In this meeting, I said, we must win the war at any cost. We must do whatever we need to for victory. This is a national issue and not a party problem, so let no one raise one's partisan views. Talking of 'your army' amounts to saying that the army protecting our country is a foreign force. Then again, it is surprising to say 'Let us define our war aims' when we have to fight the enemy to defend our country. It is for those who commit aggression on others to define their aims. Our aim is clear as day light. It is victory, nothing short of total victory. It is to make the aggressor bite the dust. Talking of defining war aims would amount to hindering the war efforts.

'I felt as if the people attending the meeting had come from different countries, representing different interests, and were sitting there almost as opponents of each other. I could not see any common bond between them. I am forced to say that even those principles of accord and consensus that are accepted by the people engaged in political activity in different countries of the world are not considered acceptable here. There is no need to emphasise how imperative the Sangh work has become in such a situation."

An important suggestion Shri Guruji had made in this meeting was that in order to halt Pakistan's advance on the borders of Jammu-Kashmir and Kutch, the Bharatiya armed forces should march on to Lahore. Our army top brass were also of the same opinion. Shri Guruji thought about how the Sangh Swayamsevaks as also the public at large could co-operate with the Government in the war efforts and how the morale of the Government as well as of the fellow-countrymen living in the border areas could be kept very high.

Shri Guruji was very happy with the way the Swayamsevaks and the public extended active support and help in response to his appeal. He had advocated the strategy of attack being the best form of defence. The victories that the armed forces scored one after the other had also sent a wave of patriotism and joy surging throughout the country. The Indian Army had simply demolished the war equipment Britain and the US had given to Pakistan. Its present performance of resounding success, had infact partially at least, washed away the humiliation the country had suffered at the hands of China in 1962. Shri Guruji was so happy that his happiness was reflected in every one of his speech in those days.

Fortunately, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri did not considered the Sangh as an untouchable. As a result, it could play the important role as the Army's rearguard and keep up the people's morale. Despite these favourable factors, the Government leaders in Delhi halted the Army's victorious advance, obviously under the Western and Russian pressure. Shri Guruji felt extremely sad at the Government's decision. He said without mincing words that it was big blunder to have wasted such a golden opportunity to teach Pakistan a lesson and break its back. When the cease-fire was announced, he said it was just an interval, an opportunity afforded to Pakistan to rearm itself and again strike at an opportune moment.

Justifying the cease-fire, the Government in Delhi had stated, that it had no intention at all of annexing Pakistani territory. Strongly criticising this stand, Shri Guruji observed that it ignored a basic aspect of human nature, which was that a person does not become violent or aggressive merely because he has the arms to commit violence, but because it is the element of violence, the cruelty in his nature which provokes him to act likewise. So, as long as this cruel instinct persists, the person would again and again amass weapons and harbour evil and aggressive thoughts vis-a-vis others. The history of all aggressive nations highlights this very fact. The problem is, how can this evil attitude be eliminated? It is not a mere material object that can be destroyed. It is manifested through a person or a group of persons. So if we want to destroy this evil, it becomes necessary to destroy the very basis of such a group of people who harbour it.'

At the same time Shri Guruji pointed out that Pakistan's war potential depended upon Britain and the U.S. and destroying the war potential of these countries was obviously beyond Bharat's capacity. Decrying the stand that Bharat had no desire to annex foreign territory, he said this so-called foreign territory had been an integral part of Bharat eighteen years ago. Pakistan had forcibly annexed one-third of Kashmir; so defeating Pakistan would only mean reclaiming our own territory. He bluntly said, "In fact our war of independence would not reach a successful conclusion untill we liberate the whole of Pakistan. There is no meaning whatever in raising the bogey of what the world would say."

Shri Guruji argued that if this was not possible, at least the cease-

fire line should be fixed at the point up to which the Indian army had penetrated into Pakistan and the same rule be applied to Bharat that UN had applied to Kashmir in 1949. The Government of Bharat paid no heed to all such advice. As a result, Shastri had to buckle under foreign pressure. Shri Guruji was of the opinion that it was not desirable for Shastri to go to Tashkent for negotiations. Still, he went and a treaty was drafted under Russian pressure. He could not remain firm even on the matter of Indian forces stationed in the so-called Azad Kashmir. But that was not to be and Shastri died a mystrious death in Tashkent. What was gained by the brave Jawans on the battlefield had been frittered away at the negotiating table. Shri Guruji was extremely grieved.

It was certainly a matter of happiness that during the period of the Pakistani aggression the whole country had risen as one grand national personality. But Shri Guruji seriously doubted for how long this temporary unity would last. He asked, 'Will this picture remain the same in future also? Can we say with all confidence that the fissiparous tendencies that have undermined our society for so long will be gone for ever?' he had raised obviously such basic question because around the same time some events of opposite trends were taking place in the country.

Referring to events like the anti-Hindi agitation in Madras and the internecine conflict in Punjab, Sri Guruji said, 'Our history testifies to the fact that once the danger is out of sight, our tendency to return to inaction and amnesia has been the chief reason for our downfall. Our society is like the sleeping Kumbhakarna. So it is essential for the nation's welfare to base our national unity firmly on a deeper and emotional and principled foundation rather than on a fleeting sense of oneness triggered during times of foreign aggression. What then can be such sensible basis for an enduring national unity except the spirit of pure and positive nationalism? Only such a spirit can provide the inspiration for the full manifestation of the invincible might that the nation displayed during the recent crisis.'

16 GUIDANCE TO VARIOUS ACTIVITIES TOWARDS NATIONAL RESURGENCE

We have seen how, after the ban on the Sangh was lifted in July 1949, Sri Guruji had made strenuous efforts to consolidate and broadbase the task of organising the Hindus in the context of varying situations. Whether it was camp for Sangh workers or the anti-cow slaughter campaign or the crisis of a war he always stressed the basic concept of our nationalhood inherent in the term Hindu. He explained how the term had been a source of immortal inspiration and the bedrock of our integrated nation all along.

He also firmly believed that in every field of national reconstruction the concept of Hindutva alone could furnish a sound basis for inculcating all the beneficial human values of life. Only by streamlining our Hindu life on this foundation could the nation lead a life of self-respect and founded on its inherent strength. He also endeavoured to infuse every walk of our national life with this life-giving principle. In this process he also imparted a new dimension to the Sangh's work of character-building.

We have seen how the work of the Sangh has till now evolved in a most natural manner. Similarly, the work of spreading the Sangh's ideology on a wider and yet wider scale outside the Shakha also progressed in a similar way. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji had requested for some workers of the Sangh for his political party and Shri Guruji had acceded to the request by selecting some capable workers for the purpose. But the Sangh kept itself aloof from politics. The workers who entered politics tried to carry their Sangh *samskaras* with them, so as to inculcate chaste national values in the political field. Around the same time, Sangh Swayamsevaks entered many other fields also such as labour, education, agriculture, co-operation, vanavasi (tribles) and journalism. Whatever field they chose, the Swayamsevaks tried to inform it with a comprehensive national outlook and sublime Hindu *samskaras.*

In all these activities, the Sangh never sought domination or the creation of a Sangh front, nor does it do so now. The only expectation

was that every Swayamsevak should infuse his life with Sangh's ideology and stick to its moorings as the basic source of his strength. Wherever a Swayamsevak goes, he should build up a circle of friends and inculcate the Sangh's ideology forever in them also. The Sangh also does not expect that an activity conducted by a Swayamsevak should be within its authority or control.

On July 2, 1956, the Panchjanya weekly published an article by Shri Guruji on Dr.Shyama Prasad Mukherji, in which he threw light on his conversation with him. As Dr. Mukherji had requested for Sangh workers for the Bharatiya Jana Sangh that he had founded. Shri Guruji dwelt on the important point of the Sangh's relationship with a political party and the possible misconceptions that might arise in this regard. He wrote:

"In view of Dr.Shyama Prasad Mukherji's expectations from the Sangh I had to naturally caution him. I told him the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh could not be dragged into politics. The Sangh cannot function under the control of any political party, because no organisation can achieve national revival by becoming an instrument of a political party. So it is impossible to use the Sangh as an instrument. Dr. Mukherji accepted this position. He had himself experienced this truth. He also added that no political party could remain under the control of some other organisation.

After this consensus on the basis of the inter-relationship between the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the proposed political party the next point that came up for consideration was 'what should be the aim of the new party?' The Sangh's goal and method of work were already clear. So it was also clear that if the new party expected cooperation from the Sangh Swayamsevaks it should have the same ideal as the Sangh. This factual premise was also accepted by Dr. Mukherji.

Today Sangh Swayamsevaks, young and old, are working in many organisations. Some of these are mass organisations. While some are limited to specific fields. Some new organisations may also come up in future. If in respect of such organisations, old or new, the question arises of their relationship with the Sangh, Shri Guruji's answer to Dr. Mukherji can be useful as a guideline. Shri Guruji would always praise those Swayamsevaks who were working in various fields in accordance with the Sangh's expectations. In this connection Dr.

Mukherji's colleague and well-known thinker Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and the architect of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Shri Dattopant Thengadi deserve special mention. Two other outstanding personalities were Shri Balasaheb Deshpande, founder of the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram in Jashpur and Shri Eknath Ranade, who constructed the grand Vivekananda Rock Memorial.

Wherever the Sangh sent some worker, he remained steadfast and brought about a new transformation in that field. This is how the Sangh Swayamsevaks have conducted themselves in the past and still do likewise. Whatever activity a Sangh Swayamsevak takes up he seeks to bring those workers, its policies and objectives in time with the Sangh's ideology and devotes himself to building it up from the grassroots. He uses his knowledge and his skill, his talents and his Sangh experience to develop the organisation and earns also social acceptance for himself as its worker. This can be called the practical face of the Sangh's basic concept of all-sided national rejuvenation.

People often raise questions about the Sangh's attitude to these Sangh-inspired activities that are growing in number as years roll by. Especially after 1950, when Swayamsevaks entered various fields this question came to be discussed in newspapers also. As the media was specially interested in politics of power it often wrote variously about the relation between Sangh and the Jana Sangh. In their view the Jana Sangh was the political front of the Sangh. Propaganda was also made that the Jana Sangh had two groups within it one which was loyal to the Sangh and the other which, what it called as, opposed the Sangh's control. So it would be relevant to dwell on what Shri Guruji said on this question from time to time.

Once he told Pt.Ravi Shankar Shukla, one of his close friends and the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh before the linguistic reorganisation of States that such a big country-wide organisation had not been built merely for engaging little children in games. He said "We certainly have a specific purpose behind it. We want to make an impact of the Sangh's nationalistic ideology on every aspect of the nation's life, and we have never hidden this purpose." Even in public programes Shri Guruji would plainly tell- Yes, we want to dominate every aspect of our national life with our ideology."

In this connection the fundamental thoughts which Shri Guruji

had expressed at the historic session's in Sindi provide a permanent guideline. In his speech on the night of March 14, 1954, he had dwelt on the supreme importance of the Shakha technique and its relationship with various new activities, and firmly stated that the Shakha was a complete system in itself. In view of the relevance and importance of this speech, we are herewith reproducing its substance :

"During the past some years a few additional activities have been started along with the Sangh work. For instance, some newspapers, schools, dispensaries etc. have been started by Swayamsevaks. This has not been done for business purposes. These are either instruments for propagating the cause of the Sangh or complementary sub-activities. Social service projects have also been launched at a number of places. The question arises, why all these new activities ? Has it been undertaken because of a feeling that the work being done in the form of the daily Shakha lacks something? We claim that we are not interested in newspapers propaganda, that we do no believe in so-called social service activities. Then how do all these activities accord with this basic viewpoint of ours? In reply I would state by way of a fundamental premise that Sangh work is independent and complete in itself and so we do not need these activities as if to make it more complete. There is no need to put forward any new argument for supporting this basic approach of Sangh. Our work is in fact based on this firm faith and conviction.

"But then the question arises, why this entry into new fields? Fact is we want the ideological domination of Sangh in all fields of our national life. These activities have not been undertaken through a sense of defeat or for making up any deficiency in Sangh work. If all this is being done through a sense of defeat it is not necessary, because a defeated mindset can achieve nothing. But the truth is that these activities have not resulted from any kind of defeatist mindset. "If we look back a little we would see that we had started newspapers even when the Sangh work was expanding rapidly. The situation at that time was such that whatever we reached a Shakha would soon come up. Whatever we touched used to turn into gold. Thus we launched newspapers not after suffering any defeat but with an aggressive attitude after experiencing a measure of success. This is our Hindu Nation, our aim is not only its protection and preservation but also its

expansion and evolution. Self-defense is not after all a very big ideal. Even for self-defense the best way is the path of offence. The Swayamsevaks sent into different fields are our soldiers sent to conquer those fields. Every such Swayamsevak has to keep living contact with the daily work of the Sangh, present a new ideal in every walk of life, and fulfill the wider goal of the cause in his specific sphere of work.

'Take the case of ordinary newspapers. Most of them have no ideal before them, their standard is low and are full of filth. But we have entered this field to eradicate this pervasive evil. Our workers in this field, some of whom are *pracharaks* and some living on a bare minimum salary always should keep this in mind. Very often, whenever a person starts some work, he will so deeply plunge into it, that he forgets everything else. They should only work keeping in mind the ideological and the practical Shakha oriented system of Sangh work. They must not think that what they are doing is itself Sangh work. If someone is entrusted with the task of editing a paper it would be in the fitness of things if he thought of that as his prime responsibility, or if somebody is given the responsibility of guarding he should stand firm at his post and think only of guarding; he then does not have to think about what is going on in a 'Bouddhik' somewhere else. But so long as there is no un-foreseen need or if there is no such specific directive he has to conduct all these activities along with the daily Sangh work. His work is in addition to the Sangh work, not a substitute. If a man is ill he may not be given food or he may be given dalia instead of regular food. But a healthy man need not be given *dalia* instead of food but *dalia* in addition to food. If someone severs his connection with the source of his ideology and then propose to propagate it that is simply not what is expected of him. A living, close contact with the source must be maintained at all costs. And then, wherever you go you have to work there to establish the ideal and ideology of the Sangh in that field and, in the process, strengthen the people's faith in the Sangh. If one imagines newspapers can do propaganda for the Sangh, there is nothing new in it. We keep on repeating the same eternal truth that this is our society and we have to organise it for taking it to glorious heights. What news can it generate? What kind of propaganda is possible for it? If this is so why have we put so many workers in this area of our activity ? Why are we investing so much labour, money and

time? Only because of our belief that even while carrying on our daily work and expanding it we can very well establish our ideals also in that field.

If we understand this we will be able to understand the real context of these additional activities. The Jana Sangh is also not meant for making up for some deficiency in the Sangh work, nor is it so important that it should be given precedence over the Sangh work. It is being carried on son as to present a model of idealism in the political field and build up an organisation that would be able to dominate the political scene to such an extent that it could direct the Government also. The Sangh worker in the political field must not feel that he is now 'free' to blow his own trumpet like other 'leaders' and indulge in a life of comfort and pleasure. He has to remember that he has the responsibility of bringing about the desired change in that field. It would be a big loss indeed if he forgets this pledge and corrupts his idealism in the dazzle of politics.

"People also ask, what will be the relationship of these workers with the Sangh? Clearly, we have sent them into these various activities to conquer them on the strength of our ideology and their personal integrity and character. They should act as the ambassadors stationed in a foreign country are expected to do. He neither marries and settles down there, nor does he sever his connection with his own country. Rather, he seeks to make an impact of his country's ideals on that country and promote his country's interests. He represents his mother country, so he is vigilant about not creating any kind of adverse impression about it.

"So also there must be no interruption in their daily Sangh work for all such workers. Many political workers came into contact with the Sangh and it expected them all to attend our regular Shakha. Today also it is the same. Outside the Sangh work one may roar and play the leader's role to his heart's content, but he must not lose the capacity to carry on the Shakha's daily work of daksha and arama. As a Swayamsevak, he should be willing to perform the smallest daily chore of the Sangh without questioning. The need to cultivate intense patriotism and samskaras should always remains intact in his mind. That is the very basic substratum of our life as a Swayamsevak. However much we may get busy with political work we should not sever

our connection with the Sangh. Rather, we should see how much Sangh work has expanded through our participation in various other activities. We should work towards a situation in which we would be able to say that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has itself become equavalant to Hindu Nation. Those who have been deputed for Jana Sangh work have been sent there not merely for working for the Jana Sangh but for spreading the influence of the Sangh in that political field. Whenever we are, our life if dedicated to our mother organisation, and the more we work to strengthen it the more successful we would be in creating an impact of our ideals in all such fields of life also. This is our life's mission, and the Shakha is at the root of it. If the Shakha is there, then everything else can be achieved. Without the Shakha what can we do? For where else can we find the source of strength for the ceaseless work of recharging our national life with a vision and a sense of mission ?

"It is not that all fields of national activity have already been covered by the Sangh. No, we have to do much more. Many times I ask whether our Swayamsevaks in the rural areas are more knowledgeable about the prevailing situation around them and capable of leadership than their, co-workers in the cities. That is indeed the advance notice of our 'invasions' in various fields of social life. We must also realise what a tremendous amount of organised man-power we need if we have to achieve that goal. Keeping this view firmly in our minds, we must become fit instruments for the fulfillment of this supreme goal in whatever field we work.

"People also ask - Does the Sangh want to control all fields of our national life ? I ask them - Have we put in all this hard labour to raise some people on our shoulders and fall at their feet ? The Swayasevaks are in fact sent into various fields of activity are to act as soldiers sent to conquer them. These workers have to keep a living contact with the daily work of the Sangh present a new model of sacrifice and capacity in every field and thus achieve the Sangh's great ideal.

Shri Guruji had the necessary insight to provide perceptive comprehensive guidance to workers engaged in all such diverse activities. He was also exceptionally knowledgeable in many such fields. He had an uncanny capacity to see the past, present and the future conditions in the country and events took place precisely as he had predicted. His

unerring guidance would always lead a worker to achieve success, whatever he was doing.

The Labour Field

Let us take the field of labour. In 1950, Shri Dattopant Thengadi had joined the INTUC. He has summarised the guidance that he received at that time and also from time to time from Shri Guruji in this field as follows:

1. Faithfully follow the discipline of the organisation for which you are going to work. Organisational discipline must be your first priority. If by chance, discipline and your conscience are in conflict, resign immediately.

2. Make a comparative study of the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and of Marx on trade union movements. Work and study should go together hand in hand. While it is necessary to keep your mental balance it is also necessary to keep up your study.

3. Also study the methodology of the Communist trade unions.

4. During traveling for the work stay with a labour colleague. Make this a practice. If we don't live with the poor and know their actual living conditions we cannot become mentally one with them. Mere book learning will be of no avail in this respect.

5. You have been elected to the General Council of INTUC as a representative of 30,000 Manganese labourers. Now give me a straight and truthful answer to one question: Do you love these thirty thousand labourers as much as your mother loves you?

6. While working for the Weaver's Congress let not the motive of political gains or the attidute of bargaining even so much as touch your heart. While expanding your area of contacts your sole aim must be to educate yourself about the weavers' problems. Consider the weaver community as an economic entity. He may be an upper-caste Hindu, a Harijan or a Muslim-never think of his caste or creed. Think and work within the orbit of the weaver and his problems.

7. In the economic field there are also organisation like the Scheduled Castes Federation and the all Bharat Landless Labour Organisation. If you keep the economic aspect in mind these organisations would

come to opt for assimilation with other landless labour as well, and that would also help check mutual ill will and bitterness.

This is a representative example of Shri Guruji's guidance on what type of representatives are necessary and what kind of discipline and character are needed while entering a new field of activity.

Later on the Sangh's plans led to an increase in the number of such activities encompassing, various other fields as well. All such Sangh workers used to come to Shri Guruji for guidance and were given proper relevant solutions. Even people from outside the Sangh also called on him. Students and those in the educational field would often come to him, as they were his favourite subjects.

His words of advice to workers the political field were soft or sharp as the occasion demanded. For instance a meeting of pracharaks and prominent workers of Punjab was held in June 1967. In his valedictory address Shri Guruji said "In the wake of the recent elections of our Swayamsevaks have assumed high and important positions in the Northern parts of our country. It is quite natural that no Sangh worker would go to them for his own personal work. Sangh work is supreme, above everything else and is verily divine work. It is reprehensible for any one engaged in it to hold out his palm before the political workers for trifles. This can also compromise their integrity and impartiality. They should be given full scope to win the people's confidence on the strength of their character and capacity. And if they fall short in this respect they should be left to suffer its consequences as well.

Shri Guruji advised the elected Legislative Assembly members of the Jana Sangh to speak quite firmly on issues affecting the overall national interest like the separatist movement in Assam and Kashmir, blind imitation of the West, national education, national security, national integration and so on. He also expressed himself freely on current affairs whenever Jana Sangh workers met him during his travels. He would effectively remove the doubts arising in the minds of those engaged in other activities also and stressed upon them the need to conform to the basic ideology and system of the Sangh work. A few question-answer sessions in his meetings given here-under can provide excellent guidance to Swayamsevaks and workers even today.

Question : To what aspects should we pay attention while working for Vidyarthi Parishad?

Shri Guruji : All such organisations, in addition to their own specific roles in their respective fields, should also work as recruiting centers for the Sangh from the ideological point of view. Those who work in the Vidyarthi Parishad for example, should see that other new students too become dedicated Swayamsevaks.

Question : Sometimes the work in various fields, in which we are engaged, does not exactly accord with the Sangh work. What should we do at such times?

Shri Guruji : If we fully understand the supreme importance of our basic work and if we have made proper efforts to explain it to others any such conflict can certainly be avoided and harmony restored. We should in fact ideologically capture all other fields, but we overselves should not become their captives.

Question : It so happens that work in other fields makes it almost impossible to attend the daily Shakha.

Shri Guruji : It is possible that such occasions may arise. At such times, permission of the concerned office-bearers of the Sangh should be taken, and then the other works be done. But under no circumstance should the work of Sangh be neglected. It should have precedence over all other works. The other works may even be connected with cinema or drama, but Sangh work should be looked upon as a must. While working in some other fields one may develop fascination for it, and then one begins to plead excuses for staying away from the Sangh work.

Question : What should be the policies of such organisation vis-a-vis launching of agitations?

Shri Guruji : First of all, the organisation should decide about its basic approach. The problems is, we look to the rights and not to the duties. A workers of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh had given me a booklet published by a trade union college in Calcutta managed by Americans. It discusses many things, but nowhere does it say the worker should put in an honest day's work. Our tradition gives us only one right - to do our duty. Has anyone, for example, ever conducted an agitaion for making students honour their teachers?

Public activities often tend to become a sort of addiction, and even if they are conducted well it does not mean they have strengthened our basic work. Liquor produces an upsurge of temporary energy, but it can never make one strong.

Even while talking to prominent political leaders, Shri Guruji was never apologetic about presenting the Sangh's role vis-a-vis the various national issues. For instance, when he along with Lala Hansraj Gupta, met Sri Guljarilal Nanda in 1966 Nandaji charged Shri Guruji for speaking on political subjects. Shri Guruji shot back: "I consider it my bounden duty to criticise ideas or activities that strike at our national unity. I shall certainly criticize the Government too on such occasions."

Shri Guruji frequently talked about how the Swayamsevaks in other fields of activity should conduct themselves and how they should not let one's ego and such other undesirable tendencies overpower them. In a meeting in 1954, he said: "When people garland a worker and sing his praises, he begins to think that he has become a leader. This is the primary stage of mind-captivating ego. The Sangh says, by all means achieve leadership in your field but never forget to bow sincerely before our great saints and sadhus. This had been our great tradition at both the levels - individual as well as social. There is no objection for you to make a name for yourself in the public life, but in the Sangh Parivar remain respectfully within the limits of discipline. We shall be reduced to *rākshasās* if we become insubordinate towards our elders, our saints and the Mahatmas. This was the reason for the demonic temperament of a Kansa and a Jarasandha. They did not stick to the time honoured norms of our social life, in which everyone observes his dharma, a code of discipline, every one bears it in his mind and in his behavior. The very first duty of a Swayamsevak should be to stand shoulder to shoulder in the Sangh Shakha and recite the daily prayer in an attitude of his sacred duty and devotion to our motherland."

In another meeting the same year in Akola, Shri Guruji talked about how one slips and falls in the political field and said:

"These days people are obsessed with elections and power politics appears to be as one of transforming man from a human being into a political animal. Today politics has come to mean never ending compromises in matters of principles. In such a situation, a political worker finds it almost impossible to lead an idealistic life. Mahatma Gandhi said he did not want independence in which cow-slaughter would continue. But having been caught up in power politics, Pandit Nehru stated cow-slaughter was a well established right of the Muslims, and so it could not be prohibited by law. Such is the primacy of vote

bank politics over even such sacred points of national faith. How sad it is, that for the sake of votes people in politics even put up with such denigration of points of our national honour. This is why our great men have said:

Varanganaiva nripanitih aneka roopa - politics takes on as many forms as a prostitute.

From time to time Shri Guruji gave clear and emphatic answers to questions posed by Swayamsevaks active in the political field:

"Those who have a taste for politics will have to work sincerely in that field. In fact if we keep firmly a Swayamsevak's attitude in our heart we can work successfully in any field." And what is that Swayamsevak's attitude ? Shri Guruji explained: 'Sangh work did not start with the premise that we should go on doing whatever the people want. Rather, the Sangh was born to make the people realise what their duties are and the deficiencies in our society and their duty to remove them. It was born so that we should inform our lives with the right Hindu view of life with pride and self-confidence, and to instill the same ideal among all our people as well. Instead of dancing to the people's tune the Sangh is working to influence their life with its ideology and transform it accordingly. This is, in fact real constructive work. It is quite natural for this type of work to take time. Transformation of human life in the right direction is certainly a slow process. If we want to do it quickly, the only way is to see that the number of workers increases and every worker devotes more time."

Shri Guruji used to emphasise again and again that the Sangh work was the only solution to the complex problem of corruption also. He stressed that it is only the organised, patriotic pressure of the people that will have the decisive power to check the corruption of those in power. The Sangh is the manifest form of what used to be called Dharma in our ancient days. We in the Sangh are not after power. Our one and only aim is to build a strong, happy and prosperous life for all people. Our work is not to form a group indulging in the political race for power. Our work is to create such an irresistible people's power that can enthrone or dethorne any one on or from his pedestal of power.

In the Field of Education

A high-power committee, set up to go into the problem of growing

indiscipline among our students, had once sent a questionnaire to Shri Guruji to which he promptly sent his reply, Which reflects clearly his basic and constructive thinking on the reorganization of our educational system. (Refer 'Bunch of Thoughts': M.S. Golwalkar : 2nd Edition p.p. 378-385)

In this connection, Shri Guruji had also met the then Education Minister Shri Chagla in Mumbai. The two held discussions regarding what direction our educational reforms should take. Shri Chagla was not at all satisfied with the standard of students coming out of the universities. Shri Guruji told him the reason why students lack character, self-respect and discipline was that they were not taught the true history of our country. This is the main reason for the lack of idealism, lack of direction resulting in rank selfishness and indiscipline. All this because mere hunting after a job has become the end and aim of our present day education. Proper teaching of history can certainly promote patriotism. It can quicken the spirit of sacrifice and the will to strive hard for making the country mighty and glorious. At the same time, he said quite frankly, "The Government of which you are the Education Minister is not in favour of teaching the students true history".

Shri Jagannatharao Bhosale, pioneer of the National Discipline Scheme, also had discussion with Shri Guruji, on similar lines. Shri Bhosale while expressing his concern over the situation said, "We have all the necessary resources, the funds and the Government's authority, but still we cannot find dedicated and selfless workers to execute our scheme. On the other hand, the Sangh is short of resources, it had no government sanction, there is also no dearth of opposition from those in power. All the same, the Sangh is able to put to work a huge army of workers who have sacrificed their personal and family interests for long years or for their entire lifetime. How has this become possible? Shri Guruji replied,"The Sangh concentrates on rousing feelings of burning patriotism in the hearts of its workers. Unless intense love for the motherland is roused it is simply not possible to create the necessary virtues and motivation among the youth."

During his countrywide travels, Shri Guruji had many occasions to visit educational institutions and interact with teachers, educationists, journalists and others. The views he expressed on such occasions clearly show how deeply he was dissatisfied with the educational

system prevailing in the country and especially with the Government's educational policy. Broadly speaking, he gave out the following observations :

1) The present educational system contains neither the best points of the modern Western educational systems nor the positive content of our ancient Bharatiya system. We have had a glorious history since hoary times and had achieved unparalleled excellent in all the various fields of our national life. But our students are totally ignorant about all these things. As no positive goal is placed before them they read something trash and go out into the world without any goal in life worth living for.

2) Right from the primary stage the right kind of ambition and also the right national view point should be inculcated in the student's mind. We have in fact, a treasure house of valuable literature, ancient as well as modern, on our great national heroes and on the historical events of great national significance. Teachers on their part should use this material for the inculcation of right *samskaras* among them. Children should be made to feel proud that they are born in the great and holy tradition of rishis and yogis. We should live like Hindus, look like Hindus, and such as the world would also recognise us as Hindus. It is only when we honour our own culture and tradition, will the world also honour us. Even the world does not want us to be mere carbon copies of some one else. A society which has been uprooted from its moorings has not future worth its name.

3) Talking of 'humanity' and 'internationalism' without the firm foothold of nationalism, only amounts to getting deprived of both. If we ponder over our philosophy and our historical heritage as a nation we shall find that it contains the highest good of humanity as its supreme goal. So teaching our students our true concept of nationalism is the same as strengthening the spirit of human values also.

4) These days the idea of 'earn while you learn' is being propagated. But the Bharatiya approach is just the opposite. We say "learn even while you earn". Our concept is that man keep on learning all his life. The unfortunate situation is that while the Western world is slowly turning away from rank materialism to spiritualism, we on

the otherhand, are slipping from a lofty spiritual life into a mere material existence.

5) Whatever be one's sect or mode of worship, emphasis should always be on educating the students in chaste character and control over the senses. Yoga too is necessary for training the mind in concentration. At the best, the present educational system gives some information about certain subjects so as to earn your bread, that is all.

6) Neglect of the teaching of Samskrit is a very serious deficiency in the present educational system and awareness of the unique contribution of Samskrit towards fostering feeling of unity is totally absent. It is sheer folly to consider that Samskrit as a dead language and ignore its dynamic potency to enliven our life as a nation. Also the Government's policy shows a singular lack of love for our own Bharatiya languages, much less any desire to develop them.

7) Our true Hindu educational system does not stop merely at developing the special qualities and aptitudes inherent in the students but goes much further. Its ultimate aim and purpose is to awaken the knowledge of the Eternal Truth of our existence and to manifest the same in our life.

In respect of education and *samskaras* for the children, Shri Guruji was specially concerned about two things. The first was as regards the conduct of the parents, and the other was about the disdain being inculcated in the minds of Hindu children learning in the Christian convent schools for our Hindu tradition, our Hindu heroes and Hindu deities. He once happened to hear a young mother from an educated family singing an obscene song as a lullaby for her child. Mentioning this, he remarked children tend to imitate their elders and if the elders in the family themselves behave like this, how can the younger generation be expected to imbibe our cultural ideals in their lives ?

Shri Guruji also used to give an example of how the distorted type of education in the missionary schools adversely affects our children. A boy of eight or nine had come for the holidays. When his parents told him to observe a fast on *Janmashtami* he said, "Why do you observe the birthday of such an immoral rapist? Why should we not celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ ?" Can you ever imagine a boy of eight-

nine asking his father such a question ? The only way to stop this is for our Hindu saints and sadhus to start schools for inculcating good *samskaras.*" `But the restrictions imposed due to the Government's policy on doing so extremely saddened him. He once said such educational institutions no doubt are there striving hard to maintain the right cultural atmosphere but even they are being compelled to give only materialistic education. We also have some religious institutions, but they are too very liberal. I would say the first priority for education has to be the teaching of love and devotion to the country. Such 'liberal' outlook can come later. It is only selected properly oriented people who can be useful for running such institutions. Otherwise, they would go away elsewhere pulled by the lure of money and other amenities. Running social service organisations also need people with an intensely patriotic outlook. For them, money is just a secondary consideration. In fact, our main worry is about finding such workers.

The treasure house of Shri Guruji's comprehensive and basic thinking was available for one and all so far as he was concerned the Sangh work of Shakha was the only direct, practical mission for him. Once, while explaining the relationship between the various national activities and the Sangh, he quoted some shlokas from the Gita :

Maya tatamidam sarvam jagadavyaktamurtina
Matsthani sarvabhutani na chaham
teshwawasthitah ॥ *4* ॥ *(C.9)*

All this is permeated by me in my unmanifest aspect (as ice by water) and all beings abide in the idea within Me. Therefore, really speaking, I am not in them.

Na cha matsthani bhutani pashya
me yogamashwaram ।
Bhutabhrinna cha bhutastho
mamatmabhutabhavanah ॥ *5* ॥ *(C.9)*

Nay, those beings abide not in Me; but look at the wonderful power of My divine Yoga, though the sustained and Creator of beings. My Self in reality dwells not in those being.

Sarvendriyagunabhasam sarvendriyavivarjitam ।
Asaktam sarvabhruuchchaiva
nirgunam gunabhoktru cha ॥ *14* ॥ *(C.13)*

It is the perceiver of all senses-objects, though devoid of all senses; though unattached and attributeless. It is the sustainer of all and enjoyed of the qualities (the three modes of Prakiti).

Those who cannot understand this basic approach of Sangh's 'aishwarya yoga' are misled into ignorance of its basic purpose and indulge in acensations against it.

Shri Guruji held that politics should not control all walks of life. Politics should be in accord with the Dharma i.e., that which sustains the society, with the eternal laws that govern human relationships, and should maintain harmonious concord in all such fields. He always insisted that a Swayamsevak of the Sangh to be aware of his very first commitment to Rashtra Dharma whatever may be his field of activity.

Even while busy with the day-to-day work of the Sangh Shri Guruji enthusiastically participated in programmes held to commemorate national heroes or for awakening pride in Hindutva. As he believed that regeneration of Bharat was possible only on the basis of spiritual virtues he participated in activities like Vivekananda Birth Anniversary, setting up of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee, Aurobindo Birth Anniversary etc. He had great reverence for Swami Vivekananda and his great Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. It was from Swami Vivekananda's Guru Bandhu Swami Akhandananda that he had accepted Diksha, So he had long contact with Ramakrishna Mission. It was therefore his intense desire to work for the regression of Hindus had come from his inner heart. So on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's Birth Anniversary in 1963 he made speeches on his life and mission and their great relevance in the current context.

At about the same time Shri Dattaji Didolkar, the Sangh Pracharak in Tamil Nadu, conceived the idea of erecting a grand memorial to Swami Vivekananda on the midsea rock near Kanyakumari where Swamji had sat in meditation. Shri Guruji naturally liked the idea and very soon a plan for the memorial was prepared. The responsibility for implementing it was entrusted to Shri Ekanath Ranade, the Sarkaryavaha of the Sangh. The Swayamsevaks carried through out the length and breadth of the country the message of Hindutva as our national ideology profounded by Swami Vivekananda. Hundreds of public programmes were held, literature distributed and funds for the Memorial also collected.

Shri Guruji was also closely monitoring the project till the memorial was completed. Whenever he travelled to South he visited that site. He even closely examined the work of carving of stones brought from various parts of the country and gave useful suggestions. He inspected every little detail of the construction work, even while seeing the dance of waves and listening with great joy to their sound going on all round the rock. As a deeply spiritually oriented person, he was naturally pleased to see that latent spark of spirituality take that concrete form of the Memorial. For him it was a dream coming true.

In his discourses to the Swayamsevaks, Shri Guruji often included significant events from the lives of Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Whenever possible he met saints, sadhus and heads of various sects and maths. He also used to discuss with them the prevailing conditions of the Hindu society. On such occasions, he would always urge these men of God to set personal or institutional ego aside and come together, with a view to making an unified effort for reviving Dharma in consonance with the need of the times. He would also dwell upon their religious and social responsibility. Sringeri Shankaracharya Shri Chandrashekar Bharati, a top ranking spiritual figure had great love and regard for Shri Guruji. A significant instance in point was when Shri Guruji's parents went to his darshan he came out of his solitude and silence and affectionately inquired after them. Shri Vishvesh Thirtha Swamiji of Pejavar Math was inspired by Shri Guruji to become dynamic in the field of Hindu Awakening. Today he is being looked upon as a great force in energizing the Hindu society.

Founding of a Global Hindu Forum

When Shri Shambhunath Capildev, a member of Parliamet from Trinidad called on Shri Guruji in Belgaum in Karnataka, his suggestion became instrumental in formulating a definite plan. Shri Guruji from the very beginning was intimately connected with the religious field. Out of his realisation of the inescapable need for the reawakening of Dharma an idea emerged in his mind.

The responsibility of translating this idea into reality was entrusted to a senior Sangh Pracharak, Shri Shivram Shankar alias Dadasaheb Apte. Details of the plan were filled up and it was decided to found the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on the auspicious occasion of *Krishna Janmashtami,* 1964.

An ad hoc committee of the Parishad was announced at a preliminary meeting held at Swami Chinmayananda's Sandipani Ashram at Powai in Mumbai. This meeting was attended among others by the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh and Vidarbha's popular saint Tukdoji Maharaj.

While appointing Shri Dadasaheb Apte for the VHP's work. Shri Guruji gave him suitable guidelines also; Hindus have settled in very many countries of the world. As they are widely scattered it is necessary to have an institution centered in Bharat that could serve as a focal cultural point for all of them. Go and meet eminent religious people and have discussions with them. Secure a favorable response from them to this projected work. Prepare a list of such people with whom discussions need to be held. I may also suggest some names, do get in touch with Shri V.G.Deshpande of Hindu Mahasabha.

Also take care to keep this important work for the Hindus of the world quite aloof from politics. Take precaution not to utilize the platform of the Hindu Mahasabha or any other political party for its sake. Only if these two conditions are acceptable to Shri Deshpande then only can he be useful for the proposed work.

The meeting on Aug. 29, 1964 at Sandipini Ashram deliberated on all aspects of the new organisation. The very first question was, what should be its name ? Everyone agreed on the word 'Vishwa' but there was difference of opinion on the inclusion of the terms Arya, Dharma, Hindu, Sammelan and Parishad in the name. Shri Tukdoji Maharaj observed, 'Here in Bharat we have been fighting with each other in the name of Sanatana, Arya and so on. So 'Vishwa Hindu' would be most appropriate.' There was consensus on this proposal.

Shri Guruji attentively listened to the various views expressed by those present. Addressing the invitees at the end he said :

If we include Dharma in the name of the organisation our work would be limited to the concept and practice of Dharma. We have to promote comprehensive thinking on all four *Purusharthas-Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha.* Our desire is to strengthen Hindu Social life from all points of view and infuse Hindu ideals of life in it. So let us not use Dharma in the name of the organisation. Similarly the term Sammelan does not give a clear idea of the work. I think Parishad would be proper.'

Everyone agreed, and it was decided that the name would be Vishwa Hindu Parishad. A global organisation for the Hindus was born, but only after Shri Guruji gave careful attention even to such small details as the name by which it was to be known. Shri Guruji's versatility impressed everybody.

After the name was selected it was decided that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad be formally established at a Hindu convention to be held in Prayag on the auspicious occasion of Kumbha in 1966. This event proved a most important landmark in Hindu history in modern times for it provided a positive religious cultural, social platform for Hindus of the whole world. A society divided and subdivided into castes and sects scattered all over the world and deprived of every kind of mutual contact got a common platform in the form of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

The three day global Hindu convention took place on Jan. 22, 23, 24, 1966 on a grand scale and proved to be an unprecedented achievement in respect of unity of Hindus the worldover. It was preceded by worldwide tour Shri Dadasaheb Apte. He had met Dharmagurus, Mathadhipatis, Mahants and religious and social workers active in their own limited fields and acquainted them with the objectives and programme of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Shri Guruji too interacted with eminent personalities for the purpose during his incessant travels.

Instead of taking the credit for the success of the convention for himself Shri Guruji said it was a worker of the Hindu Mahasabha who had originally conceived the idea of bringing representatives of Hindus of the whole world together in a convention. He had then opined that no political party should organize such a gathering. He was firmly of the view that only an organisation totally aloof from politics and working for the good of the whole of Hindu society should give the idea a concrete form.

As a matter of fact, Shri Guruji's concept went a step further than the original idea. He did not want the Parishad to be a temporary affair. So he was not content with just the success of the world convention. In fact he had kept this aspect in mind even at the time of forming of the VHP. So he had placed a regular programme of activity before the conference and had motivated workers to forge ahead in that direction.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad was fortunate in that although many activities inspired by the Sangh and Shri Guruji had been started and had progressed in various walks of life, it was Vishwa Hindu Parishad alone with which Shri Guruji was actively associated, of course not as leader but as a humble worker. At the meeting at Sandipani Ashram he had personally attended to the needs of every eminent invitees Sincerely he considered them all superior to himself and remained completely self-effacing.

His concluding speech at Prayag which evoked spontaneous and hearty response from the audience proved a classic instance of this aspect of his self-effacement. He said, actually there was no occasion for me to be present here and make a speech. But a couple of months ago, Shri Dwaraka Peeth Shankaracharya Maharaj directed me attend this conference and speak. I had begged to be excused, and said my job was to clean the pandal, and I would have been happy to do so, as a Swayamsevak. Doing something more than this would be important on my part. But how could I disobey Shankaracharya? I had no option, so I am present here in the service of such high people as yourselves."

Shri Guruji was completely involved in the entire arrangement of this convention. He paid attention even to small details and gave suggestions to the workers. At times he even lent a helping hand. Above all, he was specially mindful about maintaining a cordial relationship between the eminent religious leaders seated on the dais. All in all Shri Guruji was active like any ordinary Swayamsevak.

Yet another speciality of Shri Guruji seen during the conference was that whenever he saw any difference of opinion cropping on some question or resolution he would very modestly hammer out a consensus. After appreciative comments on the advice of various top-ranking religious leaders he would highlight the common thread that ran through all their opinions. Because of this ability to hammer out a concession, thanks to his humble and attitude and vigilance towards all the concerned aspects the convention proceeded in a constructive manner. The Acharyas present realised a new dimension of Dharma, which was that service to Rashtra Purusha was service to God.

All were happy that the concept of Dharma in the current context was found acceptable on all hands. Anybody else would have found this difficult to achieve. Had Shri Guruji not been so completely dedicated

to the tremendous task of infusing a new life into the Hindus of Bharat, and devoid of the least traces of personal ego this historic assembly of Hindus from all over the world, who were leading devitalized existence, forgetful of their identity for want to sustenance and guidance from the motherland of Hinduism, would not have been so uniquely successful.

There can be no doubt that the establishment of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad ushered in a new era. It would not be wrong to say that the Parishad was the global from of Sangh work. For anyone who wished to contribute his mite of Hindu regeneration not only within Bharat but even abroad, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad offered a unique facility, rooted in the concept of a world Hindu tradition. There was no insistence that the Parishad's method of work should be the same as that of the Sangh. In his speech at Prayag Shri Guruji had indicated what activities the Parishad was to take up.

He made the following points:

1. Owing to the prolonged slavery, lack of self-confidence, aping of others and an inferiority complex, the Hindu diaspora has been reduced to a state of being neither a Hindu nor a non-Hindu *("Na Hindur, na Yavanah")*. They should now be progressively acquainted with the unique greatness of Hindusim the all encompassing Hindu philosophy and the Hindu code of noble conduct, and thus establish the true content of Dharma once again. Initially arrangements should be made to impart only the minimum *samskaras*. What these should be it was for the scholars and savants to decide.

2. Doubtless Hindu brethern settled abroad intensely desire to live as Hindus. But proper arrangements for imparting the neccesary knowledge and samskaras of our Dharma and Samskriti, are not available to them. Consequently, there is a danger of their succumbing to undesirable modes of Western civilization. So arrangements for the imparting of such knowledge and samskaras need to be urgently made for their families.

3. In our own country, we often hesitate to call ourselves Hindus. We have become victims of a sense of inferiority complex. It is essential therefore to awaken intense pride in being a Hindu

within ourselves and also the missionary zeal to promote our sacred Bharatiya traditions throughout the world. Hindus settled abroad should be made to feel confident to declare proudly that the Hindu society in Bharat is there as their great bulwark. But for this to happen the right congenial atmosphere should be created in Bharat itself. All of us whether in Bharat or abroad should take pride in being Hindus and move all over the world with our heads held upright as Hindus.

4. We are not against any other faith; so our work will have to be based on honesty, love and purity of character and a sense of affection for the entire mankind. It would not be right to promote any kind of narrow-minded or selfish attitude in the name of any sect or religion. Let us not forget that Hinduism is all-encompassing in its spiritual sweep.

5. *Sanatana Dharma* implies the eternal, sublime code of highly principled human conduct, applicable to all human beings of all claims and times. It embodies all the various persuasions like Buddhism, Sikhism etc., born out of the same Dharmic traditions. An eminent Jain Muni has truly said, "How can he who does not call himself a Hindu also be a Jain?" All our different sects in fact, share the same holy traditions and values of life. It is our duty to evolve harmonious accord among all of them and take the whole society to the heights of spiritual eminence.

6. Our *Vanavasi* brethren, living in hills and forests, are in great distress. In fact it is our so-called high-caste society which is responsible for their present-day miserable plight. For long years these *Vanavāsis* have been subjected to grave injustice. As they are indeed an integral part of our society we should help them in all possible ways and thus atone for our past mistakes. Shri Guruji expressed his happiness at the successful conclusion of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's convention. In his valedictory address, he said:

"This event of two and a half days is worth written in golden letters. This indeed is a great and fortunate occasion for all of us. Our good fortune, which was asleep for the past many years, has now awakened. Now it will resound the world over and its banner will fly high. Swami Vivekananda had said that the day is not far when our flag will fly on top of the world. We have absolutely no doubt this will happen."

After the successful conference at Prayag, provincial conferences of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad was held in Gujarat, Maharastra, Assam etc., and Shri Guruji was present at all of them. At the conference in Jorahat, Assam, in 1970, a special progremme for women had been arranged. Rani Ideleu of Naga territory was a special invitee on that occasion. Shri Guruji urged mothers that it was their sacred duty to inculcate proper *samskaras* among the people. His guidance proved highly appealing to all those present.

His speech fore told the shape of things to come in the North-East region, comprising Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Arunachal. It also gave guidance on how the coming calamity should be combated. He warned that a conspiracy to turn Assam into a Muslim-majority province through infiltration was being hatched, and a pro-Muslim Central Minister was encouraging such infiltration. He also indicated that Christians might create trouble in the newly-created Maghalaya state. Shri Guruji had even earlier counselled against the creation of Meghalaya, but it was brought about under some pressure. Shri Guruji's prophecy came true.

Explaining what the Hindu society should do to ward off the expected calamity *vis-a-vis* Muslims Shri Guruji said:

1. During the census Muslims give inflated figures. We must be on guard against this. Every Hindu should register himself as a Hindu. Tribals, followers of any special sect, or hill tribe should register themselves as Hindus only not by the name of their tribes.
2. Hindus living in the hills and forests of Meghalaya should organise themselves and create their own leadership. Anti-Hindu elements are engaged in creating a divide in our society and make the minority Christian community powerful. We should undo this conspiracy and keep control of the situation in our hands. It is only a well coordinated society unified Hindu that can tackle this grave problem.
3. Every worker of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad should select a particular village. Then he should keep himself in constant touch with it and help the residents of that village in education, religious awakening, and in solving their domestic problems. He should live as one of them and behave as one of their family

members. This would create a sense of trust in him in their minds and promote their assimilation with the rest of Hindu society.

4. Funds collected should be used only for social regeneration. Such all-round efforts alone would be able to defeat the anti-HIndu forces, and this region would become a mighty limb of Bharat Mata.

Shri Guruji's guidance inspired workers to work hard for long years, and we see its beneficial results today.

Shri Guruji Himself Shouted "Jai to the Dharmacharyas"!

Shri Guruji was particularly happy to see that the all-embracing forum of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad was proving singularly useful in cementing the difference between various diverse groups and promoting harmony based on mutual brotherly affection in the Hindu society. Once Shri Yadavarao Joshi, previously the Sangh's chief pracharak for the south and Joint General Secretary, was asked, "According to your observation, what was the happiest occasion for Shri Guruji in his 33 years as the Sarsanghachalak?" He instantly replied, "During a conference of the Karnataka Pradesh Vishva Hindu Parishad held at Udupi, the Dharmacharyas belonging to all the various sects and sections of Hindu society passed a resolution unanimously and supported by all the four Jagadguru Shankaracharyas, declaring that there was no justification for untouchability or any kind of high or low in our *shastras* and all Hindus should be treated with equal respect and love.

Immediately after the resolution was passed, Shri Guruji felt so much overjoyed that he exclaimed, "This is indeed a blessed moment, a historic moment" and asked Shri Suryanarayana Rao, compere of the Conference proceedings, that it should be greeted with resounding shouts of 'Jai' to the Dharmacharyas' and clapping. The speeches were interrupted for some time and there was thunderous clapping and shouts of 'Jai' - in which Shri Guruji also joined. At that time his face was literally lit up with the joy of seeing the consummation of a long-awaited dream. I would say that for him this was the finest hour of his Sangh life.

"After the Conference was over, we went to the airport. There too he said to me, "Yadavarao, this conference and its proceedings have great historic import. The views expressed therein and the speeches

made, should be widely published in all our languages. Thousands of its copies should be printed and distributed." Continuous efforts by Shri Guruji or at least the previous years had at last yielded fruit in the form of that resolution. Towards that end he had held long discussions with the Jain, Buddhist, Veerashaiva and Sikh religious leaders and the Dharmacharyas of all the other sects. All these efforts had culminated in that singular success at Udupi. The new mantra *'Hindavah sodarah serve'* - "all Hindus are brothers" at the Conference given by Pejawar Mathadheesh, Shri Vishwesha Tirtha Swamiji has now assumed the sanctity of *smirti.*

This particular session was chaired by Shri Bharanayya, a Harijan retired state officer, at Mysore who was so overwhelmed with emotion that he embraced Shri Guruji immediately he came down the dais and said with tears swelling in his eyes, "It is a most fortunate moment for our brotheren that you have taken up this noble task in your hands." To which Shri Guruji replied, "Not I alone but the whole of Hindu society has accepted the responsibility for solving this problem."

In Shri Guruji's life time itself the work of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had spread out in many parts of the world. The Swayamsevaks who had settled abroad for business or for jobs had come forward to take up its work as their own. Shri Guruji wished that these Swayamsevaks should not only maintain contact with each other but should also lead their lives in tune with the *samskaras* of the Sangh or Vishwa Hindu Parishad. If this could be done by some other organisation Shri Guruji was always agreeable to any such efforts. His only expectation was that the Hindus abroad, should remain as a united whole. He entrusted to Shri Chamanlal, a senior pracharak stationed at the Delhi Sangh Karyalaya, the responsibility of maintaining un-interrupted contact with all the Hindu workers settled abroad. Since that time correspondence has been kept up with all of them.

By about the same time, Shri Guruji had received an invitation to visit Bramhadesh, but he could not go there due to the adverse attitude of our Government leaders. Shri Dadasaheb Apte began visiting all such countries where Hindus had settled. Shri Lakshmana Rao Bhide a senior Sangh pracharak was specially appointed for furthering the organisational work among the Hindus abroad.

Extensive correspondence was also carried on for maintaining

contact with the Hindus abroad and for enlightening them on the Hindu ideas and cautioning them over the impact of foreign life-styles. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad slowly emerged as a common platform for bringing all the various Hindu groups together. On the year 1970 a Gopalkrishna Mandir was inaugurated in London. In this occasion Shri Guruji sent a lengthy massage for the Hindus abroad about their role in their respective countries. It was recorded in his voice in Nagpur and the record played at the programme in London. The work of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad kept on growing at the international level.

At the same time hundreds of centres of the positive work of Parishad was also set up in Bharat. In 1979 the Second World Conference was held in prayag and it had received tremendous response. The Hindu Conference all over the country in 1952 had also been sucesfully organised under the auspices of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. At these conferences stress was laid on the religious duty of re-admitting converts into the Hindu fold. Revered Pejawar Swamiji gave the mantra *'Na Hinduh patito bhavet'* a Hindu is never an outcast. Shri Guruji's decision to fulfill a need for a common unifying Hindu form by setting up the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in 1966 was proved prophetic in the days to come.

Some other institutional and organisational activities on the same lines as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad were also launched owing to Shri Guruji's inspiration. Thousands of letters that he wrote prove his contribution to their inception and growth. He wrote to innumerable people and motivated them for religious, cultural and social work. He guided many a talented workers as to have their talents could be put to social end with best possible manner. Many people in many walks of life, such as journalists, writers, poets, social activities those with a spiritual bent of mind, retired employees, politicians and others met Shri Guruji or worte to him to seek his guidance. Everyone who knew him was quite well aware that he was selflessness incarnate. He had no material possessions to give, but the advice he could give proved invaluable. The capacity to give such advice was based on his wide-ranging knowledge, pristine patriotism, a deep religiosity and spiritual eminence.

While giving such advice Shri Guruji did not hesitate to tell the bitter truth if doing so was called for. But even that bitter truth did

not hide the sweetness of his nature. People with all sorts of doubts came to him for guidance. Even those with domestic problems came to him and he advised them as an elder of their family. There was never any shadow of pessimism in his speech or writings. He firmly believed that proper thinking and feelings coupled with self-confidence and resolute action could help solve any problem. His correspondence were replete with the spirit of optimism, his unwavering faith in God and the immortality of Hindu life, and perfect balance of mind and his letters and press conferences showed his invaluable contribution to fostering a beneficial social force whenever he could spare time from his incessant tours and programmes. For him no individual was too small or worthless and any good work worth not ignoring. The fact that he signed the letters he wrote would touch the chord of the heart of those who received them with the imprint of this personal love.

17 UNDER THE SHADOW OF CANCER

Shri Guruji was very picture of a disciplined life. During the three long decades from 1940 to 1970 there was not a single occasion when a pre-planned programme had to be suspended or started late because of his indisposition. Once, during the Telangana agitation he was on his way to a Sangh training camp at Nellore. All roads were blocked and travelling by car from Hyderabad was not feasible. Rains had also disrupted rail traffic. Many alternatives were considered, but there seemed to be no way out. This greatly disturbed Shri Guruji. Later he said in a meeting in july "I thought of a way out later. Perhaps I could have reached had I used it. That I could not reach shows my inefficiency." His ceaseless travel in the cause of the Sangh and his inspiring talk to the Swayamsevaks and others formed the unending *Sadhana* of his dedicated life.

In such a situation forcing him to rest actually affected his health. It was his second nature to suffer physical pain silently without letting anybody Know about it and to carry out a pre-planned programme even while running high temperature. It seemed as if an endless store-house of inner energy was operating within his physical frame.

Shri Guruji was slight of build and ate sparingly, but all the same he was on the move for the whole day. There was an endless stream of programmes, but there was never any sign of fatigue on his face. His sense of humour and his memory were amazing. All his concentration was on the Sangh work, and he was so completely oblivious of his own physical comfort or discomfort that it looked as if his inner person and his physical body were two different and unrelated entities.

Everyone was familiar with Shri Guruji's daily routine. It was therefore highly disturbing for all when they came to Know that he could not address the Varsha Pratipada function in Nagpur on April 7, 1970 even when he was present in the city, as he was not well. This had never, happened during the previous 30 years, and it sent alarm bells ringing all rounds. Just a day before, on April 6, he had returned from a tour of Assam and Kerala, but he was obviously unwell. People could see that he was not able to maintain his physical balance. There

was a physical checkup but nothing definite was diagnosed. The daily routine continued as before. A prolonged tour of 19 Sangh training camps all over the country was to commence on April 28. The usual programme was decided upon i.e., Bouddhik (discourses) in energy camp along with meeting of Swayamsevaks in small groups. Shri Guruji was determined to undertake the tour. He had to live up to the disciplined tradition of past thirty years.

The tour began as scheduled, and Shri Guruji travelled from one province to another. All programmes went on as planned. However some people did notice that a knot had been formed on his chest. Later it came to be known that it was there since August 1969. A small incident had brought this to light. During a meeting with an old *sanyasi* friend he embraced Shri Guruji so tightly that the fountain-pen in his breast-pocket pressed hard on to Shri Guruji's chest and caused such sudden shock of pain that even Shri Guruji's the embodiment of self_control could not hide it and exclaimed 'Ha'.

As first aid an ointment was applied to the growth. There had been a similar growth even before this, but it had subsided after homeopathic treatment. So it was thought this time too the knot would be cured. But that did not happen. During the tour another growth formed in his armpit. This came to be known on May 2. Such recurrence was not a good sign. The well-known physician Dr. Namjoshi, who had great reverence for Shri Guruji, arranged a thorough checkups and his fears came true. The diagnosis was cancer.

Some years prior to this diagnosis, Shri Srinivas Prabhu a Yoga *sadhak* and an Ayurvedic physician at Mangalore, examined Shri Guruji and had prepared a diagram of Shri Guruji's chest and had indicated an area where cancer would appear. He was now proved right. He had also diagnosed the pain, Shri Guruji felt all over his boby and said the reason lay in a 'Dosh' in his Kumbhak Pranayam. Shri Guruji later said, "He was the first person to indicate the source of my disease. "But unfortunately, he had neither the proper medicine to cure cancer nor could allopathic doctors diagnose it as cancer.

Everyone hoped that Dr.. Namjoshi would declare that there was no cause for worry, but the distress visible on his face sent a wave of fear through every heart. Now Dr. Namjoshi wanted Shri Guruji to go Mumbai and have a specific examination for cancer. But Shri Guruji

firmly turned down the request, saying his health could not be permitted to interfere with the scheduled programme of visiting the training camps. The tours and his programmes at the camps would go on as scheduled and he could not spare time for personal matters.

Shri Guruji left Pune for the next leg of his tour. At the time of the send-off everyone's face was clouded with anxiety-except Shri Guruji's. He was calm and tranquil as ever. From Pune he reached Mumbai on May 18. The Sangh workers here had already telephone Dr. Praful Desai the well known cancer specialist at the Tata Memorial Hospital. At his request and at the urgings of all workers Shri Guruji agreed to another examination. After a detailed examination Dr. Desai confirmed the diagnosis. Shri Guruji was told, but he remained as undisturbed as ever. He asked Dr. Desai,"How much has the cancer spread, and can it be cured?" Dr. Desai replied, "That can be known only after an operation. Not to operate would be to invite danger. I sincerely wish that you should agree to operation."

Shri Guruji thought for a few moments and said he would agree to it provided it was done in the last week of June after the Sangh training camps were over. So July 1 was fixed for the operation.

The tour continued and all programmes continued as scheduled. Shri Guruji was busy and as humourous as was his wont. None could imagine that they were looking at a man who stood in the shadow of death.

The atmosphere in the country was also none too good. There were political upheavals and a disturbed social atmosphere. The Congress was divided and power had passed into Indira Gandhi's hands. With the weapon of power in her hands she had begun to talk loudly of banning the Sangh. But the atmosphere had not hotted sufficiently for imposing the ban. The handle she was looking for was provided by the Muslims who had engineered riots at various places. Propaganda was unleashed that RSS was behind these riots. Anti-Sangh leaders fanned the fire of hatred for the Sangh.

But Shri Guruji remained calm. He kept explaining to the Swayamsevaks the meaning of all the seanti social happenings. He said the only refutation of all such false propaganda was to build up a stronger and more extensive organisation. In public, however, he expressed no reaction.

But when he reached Delhi on June 11, 1970, during the course of the tour he decided to take on the Sangh's detractors. He called a press conference, which was attended by correspondents of National as well foreign newspapers, and answered all their questions which were often provocative with perfect equanimity and self confidence. In reply to questions regarding a possiblel ban on the Sangh, he said such a step would not at all be in the interest of those who were thinking of it.

After this warning to the Government at Delhi, Shri Guruji went to Calcutta for the training camp there. When it was over on June 27 he went to Mumbai, as he had promised. He was again examined on June' 29 and the next day admitted to Tata Memorial Hospital for surgery.

The Surgery

On July 1, Shri Guruji was taken to the operation theatre at 9.45 in the morning. Dr. Desai did a biopsy and cancer was confirmed. Then began the operation. The cancer had spread much more than expected. All growths were cut out. The operation took three hours.

At one in the afternoon Shri Guruji was taken to his room in a semi-conscions state. At 3.30 he was given tea. On the third day, liquid flow tubes applied to his body were removed. No signs of pain or suffering was visible on his face-such was his supreme state of self-control.

People began to visit the hospital to inquire after his health. After a few days Shri Guruji himself started moving after his health. After a few days Shri Guruji himself started moving about to inquire after the fellow cancer patients and build their morale. He even started to visit a nearby Shakha for *Prarthana*.

The annual meeting of the sangh's Central Executive Committee which takes place in Nagpur in July, this time took place in Mumbai from July 10 to 12. Shri Guruji attended it for some time on July 11. Three weeks passed like this. Recovery was speedy and the time came to leave hospital. The doctors were apparently satisfied with the state of Shri Guruji's health.

On July 26, Shri Guruji left the hospital. During his stay there he had continued to make friends and become intimate with the other

patients, doctors, nurses, attendants, employees and they too used to call on him and inquire after his health. They were amazed to see that he was not in the least worried about his own health but was more concerned about the well-being of those around him. Tears swelled up in their eyes when the parting time came.

Dr. Praful Desai, the surgeon, was at first not acquainted with the Sangh. However, the pen-portrait that he has drawn of Shri Guruji as he saw him during his hospitalisation and even later is so graphic and penetrating that we have felt it useful to reproduce it in full by way of Appendix-2..

After leaving the hospital, Shri Guruji stayed in Mumbai for a week. On August 3, he left for Nagpur by train.

The news that the operation was successful and Shri Guruji was on his way to Nagpur sent a wave of joy through out the Sangh circles. Before Shri Guruji left Mumbai a grand *Satyanarayana Pooja* was held in which nearly 20,000 people participated.

On the way to Nagpur, Swayamsevaks and citizens thronged every railway station to greet him with moist eyes. In Nagpur, Shri Guruji stayed for sometime at Babasaheb Ghatate's residence. August 13 was *Raksha Bandhan* day, and Shri Guruji addressed the Sangh function in his own inimitable style and standing for a full 45 minutes. No one could have guessed that he had recently been operated upon for a deadly disease like cancer.

On August 22, Dr. Desai again examined him in Mumbai and expressed satisfaction over the state of his health. But he was running temperature since the previous day. As usual, Shri Guruji ignored it and kept up his busy schedule. On the 22nd evening an assembly of Swayamsevaks had been organised at Goregaon, a suburb of Mumbai and Shri Guruji was to go there for *Prarthana*. At that time he was staying in another suburb, Khar, and could have gone to a nearer Shakha, but he insisted on sticking to the scheduled programme at Goregaon. In a few minutes of the commencement of Prarthana it became apparent that Shri Guruji was losing his balance and looking for something to lean against. Dr. Aba Thatte and another Swayamsevak ran to help him. By the time *Prarthana* was over Shri Guruji had become unconscious.

It was then found that Shri Guruji had developed an oozing ulcer in an armpit. It was treated and the fever subsided on August 24 and he reached Indore on the 25th. Here he stayed for a month under the supervision of Ayurveda expert Pt. Ram Narayan Shastri, who was also the Prant Sanghachalak of Madhya Bharat. His Gurubandhu Amurtananda Maharaj also stayed with him. Everyone was worried to see that Shri Guruji's left hand was swollen. Shri Guruji too was worried, but for another reason. The Vivekananda Rock Memorial was nearing completion and was to be inaugurated by The President of Bharat Shri V. V. Giri on 4th September 1970. Shri Guruji very much wanted to attend the inauguration, but he could not do so.

On September 24, Sri Guruji reached Mumbai for a check-up by Dr. Desai. The doctor appeared satisfied. He said the swelling on the left arm was an index of a successful operation and was nothing to bother about. He however, said it was important to have check-up from time to time and to dress the ulcer regularly.

Routine Resumed

Shri Guruji asked Dr. Desai about his travelling and programme, who gave his consent, but said everything should be done keeping his health condition in view.

This was just the consent Shri Guruji was waiting for. He knew how much time he had been left with. Now he was in hurry. His race against death had begun. He had of course no fear of death, but was only concerned about the Sangh Work.

Shri Guruji returned to Nagpur on September 26 and resumed his old routine-correspondence, attending the Shakha, and meeting people. In case anyone asked about his health he would just say 'I am all right, please do not worry.' In his letters too he would write the same thing. This year's Vijaya Dashami function was celebrated under the Chairmanship of Shri V. Shankar, retired Secretary to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. In his speech again Shri Guruji stressed the possibility of a foreign aggression and the need to build up the internal strength of the nation. After winding up all work in Nagpur he left on a countrywide tour on the 23rd of October.

It is generally seen that those who are given to preaching high philosophy prove to be men with feet of clay when the time comes to

practise that philosophy. But Shri Guruji proved an exception. Vedanta was the philosophy close to his heart, every word of which he lived. While leaving the hospital after his surgery, he told Dr. Desai, 'Mortal that man is, he should not worry too much about his physical well-being. Every living being has to depart some time or the other. So what is important is not how long a man lives but how he lives. I have a mission to live for before me and I have to fulfill it. So I only pray to the almighty to keep me fit till the end.'

Now began the final phase of Shri Guruji's life. Time was running out, but he spent every minute of it in finishing his part of the work, in spite of hearing the footsteps of death nearing him everyday. He had no attraction whatsoever for a body that could not be of use for the work.

Shri Guruji's incessant tours, immediately after his surgery, only showed how eager he was to speed up the Sangh work. The manner he toured from October 23 to December 7, three days each in Mumbai, and at Bangalore, for a meeting of Prant Pracharaks, in Nashik and in Pune, followed by four days in Mumbai and a short halt in Nagpur, then Delhi, then Mumbai, enroute to Karnataka for a provincial Sangh conference, from there he went to Pandharpur, then to Solapur, again Mumbai, and back to Nagpur. At all these places the schedule used to be crowded and the pace hectic-meetings for guidance to workers, public speeches, and planning for the future.

On November 12, Shri Guruji addressed about 20,000 Swayamsevaks in uniform at the Ram Lila grounds in Delhi. In the evening, about 1000 eminent citizens of the capital accorded him a civic reception. By this time, the communists had unleashed the propaganda that Shri Guruji being affected by Cancer a race for the Sarsanghachalak post had begun among his followers. Making fun of this propaganda, Shri Guruji said in jest. "You see I am alive and active and so I am very sorry to disappoint the detractors of the Sangh." The whole tour showed the hurricane speed with which Shri Guruji was now working. Dr. Desai had given him around three years. So till 1973, he busied himself with preparing a plan of work that had to be completed and towards, that end he completed all his tours and programmes as scheduled.

The only exception was that in the latter half of 1972 his tour of

the three provinces of Mahakoshal, Maharashtra and Vidarbha had to be cancelled. As a severe reaction to the medical treatment he had developed intense pain in the throat; he could neither eat nor drink nor even speak. So travelling became out of question. In a letter to Maharashtra Prant Sangachalak Babarao Bhide, Shri Guruji wrote, "I could not visit the three provinces. I have asked Dr. Aba Thatte to think about how this deficiency can be made up and time found out for them by re-organising the programme for other provinces.

Even while Shri Guruji wanted to spend every moment of his life for the progress of the cause, there were shocks after shocks of agony in store for him in the form of one after the other of his old associates, friends and relatives leaving the world. Those whom, he lost during the period from July 1970 to 1973 included very many leading workers from all over the country and whom Shri Guruji had known very intimately. In addition, there were thousands of families with which Shri Guruji had close relationship. The biggest shock for him was Shri Babasaheb Apte's sudden and unexpected end. Apte was the seniormost among the dedicated Sangh workers, the very first associate of Dr. Hedgewar as a Pracharak, an erudite scholar and great *Karma Yogi*. He was continuously on his legs all over the country for spreading the Sangh work and died in his sleep on July 27, 1972 at Nagpur. At that time, Shri Guruji was in Indore and could not even be present for the last rites.

As if the loss of towering Sangh personalities like Shri Babasaheb Apte, Shri Bhaiyaji Shahadani and Pt. Bachharajji Vyas was not enough, fate had one more big shock in store for Shri Guruji, and that was the passing away of Shri Hanuman Prasad Poddar, a devoted religious worker for whom Shri Guruji had immense affection and regard. Bhaiji, as Shri Guruji called him, was the proprietor of the 'Kalyan' Magazine and the Gita Press of Gorakhpur. On all such occasions, Shri Guruji wrote letters of condolence to the bereaved families, or whenever possible called on them in person. He wrote hundreds of such letters when he was himself counting his days.

Shri Guruji had, it seems, totally detached himself in respect of his own bodily condition. For him, it was just an instrument for the mission to which he was wedded. Once the then Punjab Saha-Sanghachalak Shri Dharavir wrote him a highly emotional letter

inquiring after his health. Shri Guruji replied saying "your great love for me seems to have caused you unbearable anxiety. But please control your high-strung emotions. Do not let worry overwhelm your mind. For, I will be shortly leaving on a tour and look forward to the happiness of being in your company."

During this countrywide travel Shri Guruji visited many places of pilgrimage and holy shrines. He met many saints and men of God. Prior to his operation for cancer, he had gone to Badrinath in 1968 for the inauguration of Sankirtan Bhavan, accompanied by Shri Prabhu Dutt Brahmachari, head of the Jhunsi Ashram, who had great affection for Shri Guruji and the two also used to correspond frequently.

During the visit to Badrinarayan, Shri Guruji had performed his own Shraddha at the holy Brahmakapal. While listening to the Bhagwat Katha in Prabhu Dutt Brahmachari's divine voice tears of joy would flow down his cheeks. Shri Rajju Bhaiaya had written most a touching eye-witness account of this memorable event. During his tour of Maharashtra in October 1971, Shri Guruji also visited holy shrines in Kolhapur. Tuljapur, Shri Ram near Jalna and Ghrineshwar at Verul. At the same time, he also called upon saints like Swami Swarupanand, Nana Maharaj Arvikar, Baba Maharaj Taranekar etc. Those who were with him say Shri Guruji's face lit up with a sense of fulfilment when he met Swami Swarupanand.

Shri Guruji also visited shrines in Goa and then went to Pondicherry for Mataji's Darshan at Aurobindo Ashram. This meeting was unique being totally wordless, with only both their eyes speaking to each other which Shri Guruji himself discribed in moving worlds at Indore. On March 23, 1972, a memorable religious function was held at Kanpur, where a six-foot bronze image of Hanuman was inaugurated with due ceremonies by Shri Guruji at the local Deendayal Smarak Vidyalaya. Listening of Shri Guruji's speech on 'Integral Humanism' on that occasion an eminent elederly person remarked "Today I had glance at veritable ocean of knowledge."

This year *Vijaya Ekadashi,* Shri Guruji's birthday was on March 11 which he spent in meditation and prayer at the Ramakrishna Ashram in Madras. Such solitude for meditation had become rare for him since his absorption in the Sangh work. His service to the Almighty in the form of *Samaj Purush* had become his only prayer and worship.

But now that the end was near, it appeared that his spiritual bent of mind was drawing him closer and closer to the Divine. Now the end of the physical frame was in sight and a race against time. There were many things to be done, many new projects to be initiated. Fate was calling him but Shri Guruji had no time to listen to it. The state of his mind at that time is reflected in the message of good wishes that he had sent to a Yoga Sammelan:

'The most important thing is that when the mind attains the power to empty itself of all ports of thoughts and emotions the heart becomes infused with everlasting energy and strength and can accomplish tremendous work without exhaustion or debility. Human life then reaches the state of boundless bliss, which infact is its divine consummation.'

The philosophical exposition was, needless to say the very essence of Shri Guruji's own life experience. The state of his mind at the end of his life is expressed in a letter he wrote to Prabhu Dutta Brahmachari just a month before his death: "I am not so fortunate as to be able to listen in your voice to Lord Krishna's divine play this time. But I keep praying to Him all the time in my mind. It is my fortune that I have nothing else to do. Reclining in an easy chair I dwell in the world of joy of the Lord's name. Otherwise, when the end arrives the body would be too afflicted to pray."

Shri Guruji believed that spiritualism was the mainstay for genuine Hindu Renaissance. If any Swayamsevak were to make fun of anyone's faith in God, Shri Guruji would become upset. Once, in 1972, a summer training camp was going on in Patna. During the informal chat somebody casually remarked that Smt. Indira Gandhi's going to Tirupati for Deva Darshan was just a show for the sake of votes. Shri Guruji instantly remarked that it was an uncharitable remark, and added, "Smt. Gandhi has had wholesome *samskaras*. Her mother Smt. Kamala Nehru was highly religious. She always took little Indira regularly to Belur Math. Many leading Swamis know this. Ours is a society wedded to Dharma. By going to the Tirupati temple and performing worship with due ceremony Smt. Gandhi has only strengthened the people's faith and thus has done her duty as a national leader. Only an 'Ajatashatru' an enemy of none and a friend of all untouched by power politics, could express such noble sentiments.

He also said that critical comments about Pt. Nehru that whenever he went abroad he took Indira with him too were uncharitable. He said, "Who else was so close to Pt. Nehru in his present state of life? Then what was wrong in his taking his daughter along with him?"

Shri Guruji was keenly observing the turn of events taking place around the country during the two and half years after his surgery. He would analyse the factors working behind them, to the Swayamsevaks as well as the people. He dwelt again and again on to the positive aspect of instilling fellow-feeling and self-confidence among the Hindus. He had at the same time, given an effective reply to those who talked of imposing ban on the Sangh. Many eminent public figures and intellectuals like General Cariappa (retired), Shri Madhu Mehta of Hindustani Andolan, and Shri G. M. Laud of the Financial Express too had defended the Sangh and severely criticised the Government's attitude. Shri Laud went to the extent of saying, "RSS is pure gold". All this led to the threat of banning the Sangh recede to the background.

In the meanwhile, in December 1971 general elections were announced. The Congress (I) swept the polls leaving the opposition parties totally demoralised. Shri Guruji, as was his wont had nothing to do ups and downs in the forwines of parties. He was only sad to see that election propaganda had descended to such a low level that mutual ill will and bitterness enveloped all round. There was no check whatsoever on bribery and the use of every kind of anti-social, unprincipled means. With a heavy heart, Shri Guruji would only say 'These immoral things will only destroy the very life sap of our nation's vitality. Such election-time utter self serving immoral tactics is nothing but treachery to the country. However, the tragedy is nobody seems to be worrying about how to stop the rot."

Referring to the polluted election-time atmosphere and in order to emphasize the supreme need of the Sangh work Shri Guruji once wrote to a worker:

"All these highly improper, immoral happenings only go to emphasise once again our responsibility as Sangh workers. It is obvious that the Samskar-imparting work of Sangh alone cleanse this poisonous atmosphere and make the country homogenous and strong to the core. Hence, it is necessary to bear in mind that working with a spirit of total dedication, going from home to home with the life-giving message of

nationalism, and purifying the prevailing atmosphere has become our paramount duty.

Atrocities in East Pakistan

The election-time dust had settled down. The atmosphere had become calm. But clouds of danger from Pakistan had begun to gather once again. General Yahya Khan of Pakistan had let loose a reign of terror and massacres in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). As a result, lakhs upon lakhs of Hindu refugees began pouring into Bharat and its burden grew heavier day by day. As a result of the Awami League's armed resistance in East Pakistan to West Pakistan's domination over a grim situation of civil war prevailed all over East Pakistan. It was against this background that Shri Guruji, in every one of his speeches at Sangh's training camps in 1971 warned of the dangerous consequences of the explosive situation observing in East Pakistan.

On June, 28, 1971 he completed his tour and returned to Nagpur. By this time, the situation had turned critical. The number of Hindu refugees had swollen to over three million. The Sangh had already launched relief operations through the *Vastuhara Sahayata Samiti.* A country-wide campaign was also launched for collecting relief materials, and foodgrains,clothing and medicines were distributed at the refugee camps on a very large scale.

The Sangh's Central Executive met in Nagpur on 8,9,10 of July 1971 and passed a resolution on the situation in Bangladesh,calling upon the Government to keep its solemn promise given to the Hindus of Pakistan at the time of partition, assuring them of safety and security. The demand was growing louder every day to liberate East Pakistan from Yahya Khan's strong hold by taking recourse to military action in support of the Awami League and to send the refugees back home. Shri Guruji called upon the Swayamsevaks to be vigilant, extend all the required assistance and also keep the public morale high. When he visited Punjab in October, he was informed that in all these respects his call had been carried out by the Swayamsevaks and the army too was in full battle readiness.

Finally, on December 3, 1971 Pakistani aggression began openly. At that time, a training camp for youth Swayamsevaks was in progress in Nagpur. Shri Guruji immediately issued a statement regarding the

aggression and the corresponding responsibility of the citizens. Lakhs of copies of his statement were distributed from door to door by the Swayamsevaks. In his statement, issued on Dec. 4,1971 Shri Guruji appealed to the countrymen to rise as one man rising above political and all other differences, to repel the Pakistani aggression. He said "The unity inspired by geniune love for the motherland alone can lead us to victory". He added "Pakistan is openly at war with us. Our government and the army are quite capable of meeting the challenge, but it is essential to keep the morale of the people high and maintain highest levels of production in fields and factories. Besides our jawans on the front must feel that the entire nation is behind them. Civil defence, blood donations, nursing of wounded personnel etc., are some of the essential services to be organised forthwith.

Shri Guruji also urged the Swayamsevaks to lend full support to the defence efforts and to remain prepared for undertaking any responsibility in that respect. Actually, right from the *Vijaya Dashmi* 1970 onwards Shri Guruji had been sounding a stern warning in that regard.

His speeches at the *Vijaya Dashmi* function in Nagpur on Oct. 10, at the assembly of Swayamsevaks of Delhi on Nov. 22, the Guru *Purnima* function in Nagpur on July 8, 1971, a public meeting in Jammu on Oct. 24, and a public function in Jaipur on Nov. 26 go to show that he had predicted the coming events, and that his prediction had come true. All over the country, nearly two lakh Swayamsevaks functioned as an effective backup for the army and also in protecting the people from anti-social elements.

War had began on Dec. 3, which came to an end on Dec. 26 with the surrender at Dacca of all the Pak forces. Shri Guruji showered fulsome praise on the army for their matchless valour and magnificent strategy displayed in the war. The speed with which Dacca was made to surrender was truly breath taking. Shri Guruji had full faith in the capacity and caliber of our armed forces. When asked what would have happened if the U.S. Seventh Fleet had intervened he replied. "Then the Americans too would have experienced the tremendous striking power of the Bharatiya arms."

The liberation of Bangladesh had certainly made Shri Guruji happy, but he had also warned against relaxing vigilance even at that

hour of rejoicing. By coincidence Shri Guruji was addressing a press conference in Bangalore at the time of the surrender of Pak forces in Bangladesh. Reporters plied him with a barrage of questions for one full hour to which he gave clear-cut answers. His answers were buttressed with information drawn from multifarious sources such as constant countrywide travelling, discussions with the concerned persons and direct contact with the people, as well as Swayamsevaks who were right on the sensitive spots of such events. In view of his total identification with the interests of the motherland, Shri Guruji's replies were balanced, truthful and comprehensive, howsoever provocative or intricate the pressmen's queries.

At another place, he said there was no reason to be jubilant over the partition of Pakistan. "We learn from our past history that even after the Bahmani kingdom was divided into five parts, when the occasion arose they all joined hands to destroy the Hindu kingdoms". The drastic transition that took place in Bangladesh after 1971 only shows how true Shri Guruji's perception was. Military dictatorship then had trampled upon both democracy and secularism and the inflow of refugees and the infiltration of Muslims into Bharat continued and still continue unabated.

When the war of Bangladesh ended Sri Guruji sent a letter of congratulations to Smt. Indira Gandhi on Dec. 22, in which he wrote:

"May the unity of the country a realistic assessment of the situation, and the determination to preserve the honour and prestige of the country continue like this. This is necessary not only in times of danger but for all time and for all activities of national renascence. In the creation of the strength of national unity infused with national pride, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is and will always be with you. I have confidence that as the representative of the country you will take all these factors into consideration while determining our domestic and foreign policies. May the prestige of Bharat grow like this under your leadership."

Smt. Gandhi's reply to this letter was received in mid-January. The same month the Sangh's Central Executive also passed a congratulatory resolution over the resounding victory in the war. Indira Gandhi got a thumping majority in the Assembly elections that took place in 1972, riding on the wave of that victory.

After the war was over, Shri Guruji expressed the opinion that the Army was not given a free hand on the Western front. The Shimla Accord of 1972 had also frittered away all that the military had gained on the warfront. The Accord required Bharat to give up all the territory occupied by our armed forces. The Defence Minister had unequivocally declared that 'Azad' Kashmir was, in fact, Indian territory, and assured that Bharat's armed forces would not retreat a single inch from their present position. But politics came into play and the Shimla Accord was signed. This victory was more important from the point of diplomacy than the one in 1965. Had it been exploited at the time of the negotiations our brave Jawans' achievement would not have gone in vain. But that did not happen. The Indian Army had to surrender all the territory it had conquered and return. Shri Guruji criticised the Shimla agreement bitterly. Not a single expectation aroused at the time of the cease-fire was fulfilled. The Kashmir question still remained open and Pakistan remained as truculent as ever. Speaking in this context Shri Guruji came down heavily on the thoughtless policies of the Government leaders and said that Bharat was not following the time-tested principles of war strategy that not even a trace of the enemy should be left unfinished. As a result, victory was turned into defeat and the country had to face calamities after calamites.

Thus did the 1971 story come to an end. The Government's policies proved futile being directionless. Still Shri Guruji continued with his efforts to keep the country united and integrated. He moved all over the country delivering the *Mantra* of Hindu unity as the one single undying source of national inspiration. The turbulence in the country's political life made people listen to him with increasing attention and respect. But how much longer would these words be heard? Only destiny could tell.

18 THE FINAL STUDY CAMP

Shri Guruji was continuously on the move. All programmes pertaining to Swayamsevaks, workers and public were going on as per the schedule. Shri Guruji looked the very picture of enthusiasm and energy. Whenever he was in Nagpur then also he kept up a busy schedule. Dr. Praful Desai used to examine him at regular intervals. But it was no denying that day by day Shri Guruji's vitality was ebbing. At times he felt very weak also.

Dr. Desai and Pt. Ram Narayan Shastri were trying their best to take care of his health. But Shri Guruji knew only too well his own condition. In Jan. 1972, he was on a tour of Uttar Pradesh. Continuous travelling and non-stop programmes had left him totally exhausted. During the journey by car from Aligarh to Meerut, he remarked meaningfully to the accompanying workers: "Just consider my condition, you are keeping me always on the run!" In his tour of Goa too he admitted feeling totally tired out. From July 25 to Aug. 18, he was forced to rest at Pt. Ram Narayan Shastri in Indore. From there, by the end of September he went to Rajasthan. Here he developed fever on Oct. 4; however, he carried out the programmes at Ajmer, then went to Jodhpur, and from there to Jaipur.

In Jaipur, he fell so ill that everyone felt terribly worried. Shri Guruji could not sleep, he was coughing coupled with frequent motions. On December 9, he looked even worse. The temperature rose to 103 degress. Still he directed that a scheduled meeting be not cancelled. Now he was finding it difficult even to speak. Finally, the meeting had to be cancelled and only *Prarthana* was gone through.

The temperature now rose to 105°. Doctors attending on him scolded the workers for playing with his health. Fortunately, the temperature came down on the 10th. While taking tea in the morning, Shri Guruji said to the workers: "This is the first time I lost control over myself. Never before had such a thing happened". Now his health became a bit more stable. The meeting with *pracharaks* in the morning went off without a hitch. Local workers requested him to take rest for a couple of days, but Shri Guruji politely declined and prepared for

further tour. At the airport, he embraced the Jaipur Sanghachalak, talked to the workers and flew to Mumbai. And this proved to be his very last visit to Rajasthan. In a letter he wrote later, he expressed his regrets over the cancellation of the meeting in Jaipur because of his illness.

But now Shri Guruji began to think as to how long could he go on like this? He was no longer capable of constant tours. The time that Dr. Desai had given him was coming to close. So Shri Guruji decided that in accordance with the Hindu tradition he should have a final talk with the leading workers. Accordingly, it was decided to hold an all-Bharat study camp of prominent workers at Thane in Maharashtra. Pracharaks and senior office-bearers of the Sangh as well as important Swayamsevaks engaged in various other fields of national reconstruction were invited to it. The camp lasted from Oct. 28 to Nov. 3, but seeing Shri Guruji's condition the workers felt extremely grieved. Ominous thoughts clouded their minds. The anguish with which Shri Guruji was expressing himself visions the historic mission of Sangh made it appear as if these were his last thoughts wrung out from the depths of his heart. It was also perhaps his last physical glimpse for them. His words were thereafter going to become a sacred memory enshrined in the temple of their hearts. This meeting was indeed an emotional and deeply touching experience for the workers.

Comprehensive Thinking

The camp at Thane was held at revered Pandurang Shastri Athavale's *Tattwagyan Vidyapeeth.* It was as if a Guru was expounding his life philosophy to his disciples for the last time before shuffling off his mortal coil. With deep erudition coupled with equal lucidity, Shri Guruji expounded the eternal cultural basis of Hindu life, on the background of comparative examples and contexts from modern life. Every field of activity, he said, had to be based on that great Hindu life philosophy. The exposition was so clear and so very well reasoned that not a single doubt was left undispelled.

The very first question raised in the camp was: why should we go on chanting 'Hindu', 'Hindu' all the time? In view of the prevailing situation in the country, why not give up this term and take up 'Bharatiya' or some other appropriate term? If we do so the Sangh

would not be charged with communalism. As some people were often heard calling the Sangh narrow-minded and communal this doubt needed to be clarified. Shri Guruji himself raised this point and said: 'It is true that all sorts of misconceptions are sought to be spread about the word 'Hindu'. Various vested interests are propagating that the Sangh's concept of 'Hindu' is anti-Muslim, anti-Christian, anti-Jain, anti-Harijan and so on. This charge however, is not based on any solid basis. Had those who are indulging in it studied dispassionately the religion, culture and history of our country as reflected in the Sangh's thought they would not have resorted to such false allegations against the Sangh. Our Hindu philosophy and the Hindu way of life have been existing and flourishing in this land for thousands of years much before Christianity and Islam were even born. Then how can Hinduism be ever anti-Muslim? So far as the sects like Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism are concerned they are all, in fact, included in the vast concept of 'Hindu'. Those who refuse to call themselves Hindus be just like a limb trying to breaking itself away from its main body, which will be nothing short of suicide on its part. The Hindu thought pattern has not only been always positive and never negative in its approach, but all inclusive in its approach.

Shri Guruji said, "Some people hold that in the interest of national integration some alternative to the word 'Hindu' should be used. Even if some equivelent term is found, will the basic meaning of 'Hindu' 'Arya' also means what 'Hindu' connotes. Some people ask 'why not 'Bharatiya'? but whichever way we twist it and turn it round, it would still mean exactly what 'Hindu' implies. Then why not be unambiguous and use the word 'Hindu'? itself. 'Hindu' is now the word in common usage among all sections of our people even. When we think about the all-round progress of our nation, it becomes possible only on the basis of Hinduism, Hindu culture and Hindu society. So if we give up the term 'Hindu' understood in its broadest sweep, there would remain no nation at all, no national identity worth its name. Our society would then become just a motely crowd of biped animals. Firm conviction of the worth and greatness in the word Hindu will alone able to import be strength to his words. So let us resolve to assert that we are proud to call ourselves 'Hindus' and that our religion, culture and society are 'Hindu'. Our nation has been founded on that grand basis which has stood the test of ages. And it is for achieving the glory of this nation

that we the Hindus have, in fact, taken birth. Let it be very clear in our minds that we do not want to compromise in the least on this point in any manner whatsoever.

"As we have noted already, the work of Sangh is all-inclusive, all comprehensive. But what do we mean by that? Light is everywhere, but it does not by itself carry out all the functions of nature. It dispels darkness, gives energy and lights up the way. We must clearly understand this, otherwise we would be landing in confusion. If we go on interfering with every sphere of activity directly we would have to write a treatise on each one of them. Then the basic work of character building and organising the society would come to a halt. We would just be left with those lifeless volumes, that is all. So we, in the Sangh, have kept before our eyes the actualisation in practical life of the integrated vision of our national life as our life mission. It is on the basis of this great idea, this sublime principle, that our workers should strive to organise the people in their respective fields of activity.

"In our culture, the entire society is considered as a living entity. It has been described as '*Sahasra Shirsha purushah, sahasrakshah sahasra padah*' that is, '*Purush*' - the corporate personality - with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. Basically speaking this is God's description. But for us, the society is our God, our *virat samaj purush* which has millions of heads, hands and eyes. It is to this *virat Samaj purush* that we offer our worship. We also know that it is the same life force of culture which courses through every limb of this '*Virat*' body. The most important thing is to feel it, to experience it in our life. It is only the experience of this unifying energising principle which will coordinate, inspire and properly guide us in the entire gamet of our life activities. We must clearly understand that whatever material goods that we produce are for the use of this *virat purush* only. The concept of the society as a colossal living being a *virat purush* and experiencing the eternal life-principle coursing through it are the unique features of our task of nation-building.

"Further, if we stay away from this basic view-point we cannot hope to achieve happiness for the entire mankind either. One may well ask - "Why should we at all think of making whatever is in our possession available to one and all in the society? Why not think of ourselves alone? Why should we bother about the joys and sorrows of others?

What do we have to do with them? According to the materialistic view of life obtaining in the West we are just different forms made up of the same matter and as such there is no intrinsic connecting bond between us and other beings, nor is there any reason for us to feel or work for them.

'All modern ideologies too accept that we should indeed think of the good of the whole society. But what kind of relationship do they conceive between one individual and another? What is the philosophical basis of that social oneness that gives rise to sharing of other people's joys and sorrows? What is that joining factor? The fact is, in Western thinking, there is no such solid, emotional basis and the only principle accepted outside Bharat is that all are entirely different entities and as such there is no intrinsic connection between them. So there is no reason to feel or worry oneself for the sake of others. Foreign ideologies also do use that term but by the term 'society' they just mean a mere collective joining together of many people's disparate personal interests i.e., a sort of compromise in order to sence one's own interest. As such foreign ideologies comprise of compromises and lacks the vital element that binds people intrinsically and makes them experience the happiness and sorrows of others as ones own. In fact, it is that binding factor which is our real Existence, the core Reality within us. Our physical entities may be different, our hopes and aspirations may be different, but the same Eternal Existence resides in all of us. which is the essence of unity of all forms of life. Feelings of joy or sorrow of others are verily the manifestations of the experience of that inner unity. This experence of the unified existence of all of us goes to make the society.

'The society comes into being when this sense of oneness takes root in the heart, and with it comes the thought of working for the happiness of the society. This in turn leads to efforts to create a system in which one's personal interest merges into a harmonious social whole. In this process we have to give up our exclusive individualised interest. For, pursuing it to the detriment of our collective being will only prove suicidal. So it becomes our duty to make available to every individual the means to lead a happy and contented life.

This spirit of oneness will dissuade us from hoarding more than we need, because such extra resources belong to the society, and not to the individuals and must be used for the good of the society. It is

this spirit dedicating ourselves to the society in a spirit of service and self-sacrifice that leads us to the supreme human goal of identifying ourselves with our Real Self which is the source of all Knowledge and Bliss.

'The way of life that is guided by this holistic principle of life is known by the name 'Hindu'. Nowhere else we find such depth of thinking on the fundamentals of individual and social existence. This is the greatest gift of Hindutva to humanity. So, awakening this principle in the heart of our people is our first and foremost duty on the path of our life-mission of achieving human harmony and unity in the entire world.

'The history of countless centuries of our society has proved that only such a life-philosophy is lasting and conducive to human welfare. The various ideologies that we see parading themselves as devoted to the good of mankind are as their past history tells us not going to endure for long. With upheavals in the global situation they either change or are discarded and go into oblivion. We must test all such alien political and economic systems on the touchstone of our Hindu viewpoint.

However, unfortunately, we have discarded this basic principle and its oweful consequences are before us. We see poverty stalking all around. People suffering from delusion about the real concept of Hinduism hold the Hindu way of life responsible for all this. But that is simply not true. On the contrary the present situation has come about as a result of our forgetting the holistic Hindu view of life. For instance it is entirely wrong to consider untouchability as a product of our Hindu view of life. The fact is that all such social evils have come about solely because of our forgetting and giving up the basic unifying life impulse embodied in the Hindu way of life.

'It is generally held that the modern life-style makes for human happiness. There is also a race by each one to get the maximum amount of this kind of happiness. Towards this end, these pursuers of happiness have built a permissive society, and consider it a progressive society. But we must understand that such permissiveness strikes at the very basis of and only means its end. For, then only the 'contract theory' remains. Which is just a compromise for the accumulation of goods for unrestricted enjoyment.

'This principle of social compromise based on the individual's

rights and interests naturally involves competition among individuals for achieving greater happiness for oneself than the others. People normally think healthy competition leads to progress. But the fact is no competition is all that healthy. Selfless competition is indeed a near impossibility. Competition that may initially appear healthy soon gets distorted into exploitation of the weaker by the stronger in the society. Healthy competition is supposed to inspire us to better ourselves, but actually it leads to an effort to denigrate the other competitor. A race begins more for pulling the other person down than for rising oneself high. The end result of such competition will simply all round conflict.

'This unhealthy spirit of competition is at the root of the various conflicts that we see raging all over the world today. This conflict originates in the desire to rob others of their happiness for the sake of augmenting one's own happiness. Thus we see, the Western thought of 'permissiveness' and 'competition' can never make man happy.

'So we must ask ourselves a basic question-what, after all, is the end and aim of human life? Is it only acquiring material happiness? Normally, people think that attainment of happiness is man's primary goal. But often such happiness is far too short lived and sorrows follow into sorrow. And human life is full of such occasions. So man wants eternal, unending happiness.

'As man has a physical body it is necessary to fulfil all physical needs. These needs include many enjoyments and they need not be considered unacceptable or reprehensible. It is not necessary to deny the tendency of the body and the mind to enjoy. What is however, needed is to ensure that man does not lose himself in these enjoyments. This state of happiness is neither supreme nor worthless something to be discarded altogether.

Achieving happiness is no doubt man's supreme goal. Every living being years for ever-lasting happiness untainted by sorrow. But the common man cannot comprehend what exactly constitutes eternal happiness. Man seeks sensual pleasures under the impression that it constitutes real happiness and so chases after it. As man is a 'thinking animal' he also keeps on looking for ever new means of getting more and more of this kind of pleasure. Man's very first craving is the same as that of other animals-enjoyment of the senses. God has so fashioned the senses that man looks outwards for happiness through them. He

is normally unable to look inward in search of real happiness. But it is also common experience that pleasures end in sorrow.

So man begins to think - if there is a desire for eternal happiness within me, such happiness must exist somewhere inside and not outside. Then questions like, 'is it within my body or within my mind? or where is it?' haunt his mind. He finds that many external objects do fulfill his desire for enjoyment, but after some time the desire to enjoy them returns once again. Momentary satisfaction and unending cycle of desires - that is the sign of sensual pleasures. Such pleasure is naturally ephemeral. The more you enjoy, the greater grows the desire. And where there is desire, there is always mental hankering after such objects of enjoyments and so he is always restless and cannot be happy. Then man begins to think - if happiness does not lie in the fulfillment of desire, where, after all, does it lie?

'In this regard, Bharatiya seers honour emphatically stated that happiness lies within ourselves. It lies within our own inner personality and not deep in external objects. They have also, after deep thought and on the strength of their own experience laid down some definite guidelines for acquiring real and enduring happiness. The first principle they have enunciated is that the mind so long as it is unsteady and restless can never experience happiness. The mind must remain stable, calm, if it has to experience such supreme happiness. For that, the unending waves on the surface of the mind need to be controlled, quietened. When there are waves in the water you cannot see your face in it. When the water is calm it reflects everything deep inside. The mind is like water. When it is calm one can see one's real self in it. So the first need is to quite the mind, in order to experience the Self- which is in fact the source of all happiness.

But can man's mind remain calm and stable in such so-called progressive countries where competition, hatred, bitterness and animus born of envy exist? In such a situation the tempest of desires and ensuing restlessness can never be controlled. Then how is happiness possible? So in Bharat we are taught not to be envious of other people's happiness. We should congratulate such happy people and strive for our own progress. If we think of becoming happy at the cost of others' happiness our mind would only become disturbed, resulting in our own unhappiness. It would not to ape other countries and go on try

accumulate material goods in the hope of greater and greater physical enjoyment. It is also wrong to seek one's own happiness in the unhappiness of others. On the contrary their sorrow should create compassion in our mind, leading to an effort to make the unhappy happy. There is a unique satisfaction in doing so, and also undiluted happiness for ourselves.

A permissive society too is detrimental from all points of view. Our *Puranas* have described a condition of society devoid of any kind of restraint or norms of an ordered social life. But when the leaders of society saw that absence of such order led to an overall increase in immoral and mutually exploitative forces, regulations were considered necessary for the conduct of human affairs. Experience the world over also tells us that a permissive society can only breed immorality and make man the enemy of man.

So our *Shastras* have ordained that since unrestrained desires and competition for their fulfillment only lead to human misery, man needs to cultivate self restraint. It is as much necessary for the individual happiness as for the over all interest and harmony of the society. However, it is also obvious that it is not so easy to cultivate self restraint. For this purpose, we in this country have conceived of four *Purusharthas*, (four fold achievement of human life) in which self restraint is achieved by insisting on the duties of the individual and of the society, in place of rights and self-interest. These duties and obligations are compediously termed as Dharma which regulate the life of individual and of the society in every single sphere and stage of life. It is under the confines of *Dharma* that *Artha* and *Kama* that is, material objects of happiness are to acquired and enjoyed. And when such all round restraint is practised in accordance with the dectates of *Dharma*, one becomes ready to achieve the fourth *Purushartha-Moksha* the experience of one's eternal, blissful self. It is within the restraints of *Dharma* the first and *Moksha* the fourth Purushartha, that man can achieve and enjoy maximum happiness in his life.

A river, for example, is beneficial to mankind only so long as it flows within its two banks, but when it crosses the restraint of its banks it becomes destructive. Similarly the river of acquiring and enjoyment of material objects would lead to man's happiness only they run between the two banks of *Dharma* and *Moksha*.

This integral concept alone, it is clear, will be able to secure happiness and harmony for the whole of humanity. Keeping the undesirable consequences of competition, and unenjoyment of restrained material pleasures strictly under a code of moral and spiritual values and concentrating on the final consummation of human life i.e. *Moksha* is the only way for achieving individual as well as collective happiness. It is only when we as Hindus devotedly take up this holistic philosophy as our own that we can succeed in realising the mission of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh of delivering that holistic saving message to the entire world.

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19 FAREWELL

The study camp at Thane was going on well in the spirit in which it was conceived. Shri Guruji was providing guidance despite being seriously unwell. Every day he had also to visit the Tata Hospital for deep X-ray therapy. As a result speaking too had become severely painful for him. He knew that his time was running out and he had to utilise every moment of his remaining days to pour out his thoughts before the end came; so he talked despite his acute suffering. After the camp was over he stayed on in Mumbai till the 11th.

As a result of the deep X-ray therapy, Shri Guruji's throat had got scorched. Speaking and eating too had become very painful. On their part the doctors used to advise him to keep silence, but how was it ever possible? On the other hand, when workers and others would call on him to enquire about his health he would ignore his personal agony and would inquire after their health and their other affairs. During this period, tours of three provinces had to be cancelled. Though he could not talk, but could only write, so he wrote innumerable letters to workers and others spread out throughout the country.

Shri Guruji was the Chairman of the 'Dr. Moonje Birth Centenary Committee.' He speeded up the Committee's work by sending out a circular letter signed by himself. On his request Gen. Cariappa had accepted to unveil Dr. Moonje's statue. Sri Rajaji's name also had figured prominently among those who were approached for serving on the Memorial Committee. Shri Rajaji, at first, refused saying he had had enough bitter experience in such fund raising affairs. However, when Shri .Guruji's personal letter was handed over to him, he immediately responded saying, "If Shri Golwalkar is there on the Committee, I am quite confident about the proper spending etc., of the funds," and affixed his signature. The incident is so eloquent in itself that it needs no explaining its significance.

The pain in his throat had gradually lessened. Eating also had become more or less painless. So Shri Guruji resumed his tours as already decided upon. He had once said in jest, 'The railway compartment is my address, and our society spread all around is my family.' Constant

travelling and constant interaction with the society in the cause of national enlightenment had truly become his overall life-pattern. From Dec. 2 to 13 Shri Guruji stayed with Pt. Ram Narayan Shastri in Indore in the company of Shri Amoortanand Maharaj. It was a period of rest, but he used it for pondering over what projects were underway and which ones needed to be speeded up. Then he returned to Nagpur and participated in the ceremony of unveiling of Moonje's statue. After Gen. Cariappa departed from Nagpur he too left for attending the training camp at Karnavati. On the 2nd of January he returned to Nagpur for the regional *pracharaks*' meeting. From 8th onwards he toured Mahakoshal, Vidarbha, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra, carried out all the scheduled programmes, and returned to Nagpur on Feb. 20.

The latter part of the tour included Bengal, Assam and Bihar. In the meanwhile, after completing the tour of Bengal, Shri Guruji went to Kashi at the loving insistence of Prabhu Dutt Brahmachari, for a special programme. It was *Vijaya Ekadashi* i.e. Shri Guruji's birthday. Many leading workers had assembled. It was a very special emotionally charged occasion for the Swayamsevaks of felicitating their beloved leader in the auspicious presence of two saintly personalities, Prabhu Dutt Brahmachari and Pt. Rajeshwar Shastri Dravid. As everyone was aware of Shri Guruji's failing health, the atmosphere was grave as well as intensely touching. Shri Guruji touched the feet of both the *mahatmas* with his head and sought their blessings. Shri Madhavarao Deshmukh of VHP had organised a '*Rudrayaga*' for seeking God's Grace for Shri Guruji's health and everyone naturally desired that its *Purnahuti* be performed at Shri Guruji's hands. In deference to their wishes Shri Guruji performed the rites sitting for full two hours, but he did not seem very much interested in all that. He thought that such ceremonies merely for the sake of one's health were pointless. And so he sat with a detached mind all through the ceremony.

In February, he addressed a public meeting in Bangalore in English, standing on his feet for one full hour. He knew it was his last visit, and so he did not object to taking of photographs. Then Shri Guruji left for the next lap of his tour, which was in a difficult terrain. But Shri Guruji knew in his mind that travelling and meeting workers and people may no longer be possible thereafter. So he bore all that

strain and then finally returned to Nagpur on March 14, never to go on a tour again. Actually during this itinerary itself, at Ranchi he had received the final warning, where he felt seriously out of breath and had to rest in the railway compartment at the station itself.

Farewell Message

On his return to Nagpur medical treatment was resumed afresh and in all regularity. The atmosphere in the *Karyalaya* was thick with anxiety. Shri Guruji agreed to the treatment despite knowing it was of no use. He was being given injections as advised by Dr. Praful Desai. In the meanwhile, a meeting of the Sangh's Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha was arranged at Nagpur, where he spoke in the concluding session. It was clear that he was summoning the very last ounce of his energy to speak and the assembly could not bear to see his suffocating condition. All eyes were moist. Shri Guruji spoke for nearly forty minutes. Striking a reassuring note in this his last and final message he expressed supreme confidence that the day of victory for the Sangh's mission was not far off. He also saw the tears of those who approached him to take leave of him but Shri Guruji himself tried to lighten their hearts with his habitual mirth and laughter. Possibly it was at the time of this meeting that Shri Guruji might have consulted his senior colleagues and decided upon Shri Balasaheb Deoras as the next *Sarasanghchalak*.

On March 26, Sri Guruji went to the Mohite Shakha adjacent to Dr. Hedgewar Bhavan, the Sangh's central Karyalaya for the *Prarthana* and that was the last day he could recite *Prarthana* on the Sanghasthan. From the next day onwards he had to say his *Prarthana* standing on the terrace of Dr. Hedgewar Bhavan near his room. From 26th onwards he could not even bathe with his own hands. On April 2, 1973, he wrote three letters in his own hand and handed them over to the office secretary, Shri Pandurang Kshirasagar. At times, he would feel some what better, at times far too worse. He no doubt took medicines for assuaging the anxiety of the workers but now his mind was dwelling in something beyond. A complete sense of his detachment from the happenings in the external world was clearly observable.

Dr. Sujit Dhar of Calcutta used to visit Shri Guruji once a fortnight to examine him. On the 26th, Shri Guruji said to him, 'Why are you trying to sustain this body?' How many more days would you be able

to save it?' Of course Dr.. Dhar had no answer. On the 30th, another x-ray was taken. It appeared normal. Shri Guruji too looked cheerful. A few days later, he also began to walk about in his room and maintain his balance. This improvement lasted till May 19, but breathlessness started once again. The treatment left nothing to be desired, but Shri Guruji's body was no longer in a position to respond to it. It seemed as if the vital element residing in it was now preparing for it's final release from the bodily bondage.

The annual month-long training camps had started in several parts of the country. Sri Guruji was very sad that he could not attend them. The Third Year Training Camp also had begun at Nagpur. Even though Shri Guruji could not go to the camp, neverthless he intensely desired to meet the Swayamsevaks. So finally it was decided that from 16th onwards Swayamsevaks should meet him province-wise at Dr. Hedgewar Bhavan itself. Such meetings, would last for about 20-25 minutes in which the Swayamsevaks would introduce themselves and then Shri Guruji would speak for about five minutes. He would urge them, with all the energy left at his command, to take forward the work of Sangh with full faith and confidence in its ultimate success. This exercise went on till the 26th. After that, even that had to be stopped since breathlessness became once again acute.

Swayamsevaks, workers and other persons from various walks of life began to call on Shri Guruji to inquire after his health with deep concern, pulsating in their good wishes for his speedy recovery. It appeared as though the faith and devotion of unending stream of visitors drawn from all over the country, so far suppressed, was now flooding forth. Shri Guruji had known many eminent people even outside the Sangh circles with whom also he could not speak more than a couple of sentences. All over the country, many fasted, many offered prayers, many performed *Havan* and other religious ceremonies for his recovery.

On May 31, Shri Guruji's breathing became even more difficult. Now his words too were sufficiently portending the coming end. When, on June 3, Smt. Maushi Kelkar, Chief of the Rastra Sevika Samiti called on him, he said, 'I am now quite ready,' evidently for responding to the final call.

On the night of June 4, Shri Baburao Chouthaiwale came to

massage him with his usual bottle of oil. But no oil came out of it. Shri Guruji saw this, smiled, and said, 'The oil is finished? That is all right. Anyway, who's going to need it tomorrow?" The agonising significance of the words was not lost on Chouthaiwale. The whole day Shri Guruji sat in his chair facing north. He looked like a Yogi, his eyes half-closed, probably contemplating the Divine. That night also he did not lie in bed, but kept on sitting in the chair in the same posture. He knew the day of departure had finally arrived.

June 5, 1973. Shri Guruji took his morning bath and performed *Sandhya* as usual in the sitting posture. Since, breathing had become too difficult Dr. Aba Thatte tried to give him oxygen. But Shri Guruji raised his hand and said, "Let it be, Aba. The bell has rung." Now there was an unearthly serenity on his face. He pared his nails, sat in the chair, and kept his *Kamandalu*, which was always with him, on his right. This he used to do only when he was going on a tour; otherwise he always kept it on his left. For Dr. Thatte it was an extremely painful gesture. Shri Guruji was restless and evidently in great pain. With Dr. Thatte's help he went to the bathroom to ease himself. Then he washed his hands and feet. It was as if he was cleaning up before going to meet his Maker.

Around midday, the doctors gave up all hopes. Shri Balasaheb Deoras was sent for from Hyderabad. In the evening Shri Guruji was requested to keep sitting in his chair while saying *Prarthana*. Tea came at 7.30, but he declined. At eight he took Baburao Chouthaiwale's help to go to the bathroom to ease himself. He washed his hands and feet and began to rinse his mouth. He began rinsing again and again and continued to do so for eleven times. Finally, Baburao took the vessel from his hands and kept it aside. Then he raised up Shri Guruji. Suddenly, Shri Guruji let his neck fall on Baburao's shoulder. Baburao opened the door of the bathroom. Shri Vishnupant Muthal, Shri Guruji's constant attendant hurried and the two brought Shri Guruji to the chair and seated him. His eyes were closed, there was no movement, only low breathing.

Dr. Thatte contacted the doctors. They said, 'Nothing can be done now. Let him depart peacefully." Gradually the breathing slowed down. The countenance was calm and serene. At five minutes past nine at night, there was a final, long sigh-and the end.

Shri Guruji was no more. Workers crowding around him could no longer check their flood of tears. The mortal remains were brought downstairs and placed in a big room. The news of Shri Guruji's passing away spread like wild-fire all over the city; the local station of All India Radio broadcast the saddening news. Now the whole country came to know of it. By 9.30 at night a big crowd gathered outside Dr. Hedgewar Bhavan. Thousands of Swaymsevaks, many even from out of the town, streamed there for the final *Darshan*. Tears flowed profusely. Shri Balasaheb Deoras reached at noon and broke down while offering flowers to Shri Guruji's mortal frame. While the people heaped garlands over the body there was non-stop recitation of the Gita.

The three letters Sri Guruji had handed over to Shri Pandurang Kshirsagar were opened in the presence of all. There was pindrop silence as the gathering listened to Shri Guruji's parting words. In one of the letters, he had entrusted the Sarasanghachalak's responsibility to Shri Balasaheb Deoras. Maharashtra Prant Sanghachalak Shri Babarao Bhide read it out in grave tones on the microphone. The other two letters were read out by Shri Deoras. In one of them Shri Guruji had directed that there should be no memorial for him. In the third, he had quoted the final humble prayer of saint Tukaram which brought tears to the eyes of one and all assembled there. When, at the time of his end, Tukaram found himself unable to go to Pandharpur for the *Darshan* of Lord Vitthal, he conveyed to those going to Pandharpur,

"Oh saints and holy men, convey this my final prayer to God. Oh God do not forget me. What more can I say? You, my Lord, know everything. I bow to you, says Tuka. Take me into the shelter of your Grace."

Shri Deoras was so overcome while quoting the saint's extremely touching words that he could hardly speak, he had to struggle while uttering every word. Shri Guruji's quoting them had spoken of his own humble and total surrender to God.

Outside Dr. Hedgewar Bhavan preparations for the last journey were complete. Shri Guruji's mortal remains were placed in a truck, and after the new Sarasanghachalak Shri Balasaheb Deoras offered a garland the funeral procession began. Shri Deoras and thousands of others broke down in uncontrollable sorrow.

The procession wended its way towards Reshim Bag amidst the

chanting of *Ram Dhun*, and slogans like *Bharat Mata Ki Jai* and *Shri Guruji Amar Rahe* filling the skies. A veritable sea of mourners on foot had overflowed into the procession along with the truck carrying Shri Guruji's mortal remains. It took over two hours to reach the Reshim Bag. It was then 7.45 in the evening.

A pyre of sandalwood in front of Dr. Hedgewar's Memorial was kept ready. Shri Guruji's body was placed on it, and Shri Vasudev Golwalkar of Pune lit the pyre with *mantragni* and the final Sarsanghachalak *pranam* offered to Shri Guruji's memory. The flames that soon rose high consuming the physical frame of Shri Guruji lit up Dr. Hedgewar's Memorial. The atmosphere was heavy with the silence of sorrow, broken only with occasional sobs. After some time, Bhagwa Flag was unfurled, and the Sangh *Prarthana* recited amidst deep unspoken grief. With '*Bharat Mata Ki Jai*,' the *Prarthana* came to a close and with '*Vikira*' the Shakha came to a close and grieving Swayamsevaks and citizens returned home, their minds filled with the radiant image of Shri Guruji and his inspiring words.

Now there were two great souls, two modern seers, resting at Reshim Bag - Keshav, the visionary founder of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and Madhav who had nursed the seed of the Sangh to grow into a giant Bunyan tree.

All his life, Shri Guruji was sought to be made a controversial figure by certain interested persons and parties. However, his life was so transparent that any one could read his life as an open book. He had nothing else but patriotism ever burning bright in his heart. But those who looked at him with eyes jaundiced by political or partisan interests thought him 'communal', 'revivalist', 'an inciter of violence' and what not. All efforts were made to paint him as an enemy of Muslims and Christians.

Universal Hindu Philosophy

The question is, what were all the so-called controversial points in Shri Guruji's thinking and actions? Who were its authors? And if today, those very controversial ideas have acquired a decisive cutting edge in our national life what is the reason? Time has answered all such questions effectively. The answers show that Shri Guruji's tireless efforts brought about the required healthy mental transformation in the whole of the country. By establishing the basic life-philosopy behind this transformation he has indeed saved the country from getting dissipated. His achievement in implementing time honoured cultural values in the Bharatiya mindset is unparalleled.

Before independence, fighting the British for achieving independence formed the main inspiration for the people. It had covered up many things. There was only one common enemy- the British. So internal differences in the society did not come to the surface perceptibly. But with the advent of independence a political current which also had its beginning in the pre-independence days began to flow like a flood—the current of de-Hindusing the Hindus. It was not of conversion to alien faiths alone but one of implanting an insidious inferiority complex among the Hindus, making them ashamed of being Hindus. It meant the deliberate denigration of everything Hindu, and the cultivation of the attitude of aping the West in every single aspect of life. Superficial differences among the Hindus were blown up, and the internal thread of integral Hindutva dispised and discarded. This thought current was made up of de-culturisation on the one hand and politically motivated

limitless appeasement of the non-Hindu minorities on the other. This current still flows, but in those days ridiculing everything Hindu and denigrating Hinduness by Hindus themselves had become a matter of prestige. Such demeaning self denigration and self-denial came to be called 'secularism', 'progressive' etc.

Those who joined hands in this campaign to destroy Hindu identity included Christian missionaries, Communist propagandists, rabid Socialists, the so-called educated elite, and power-hungry politicians. Their individual motives were different, but their aim was common. Unfortunately, there was no leader of all - Bharat stature who could fearlessly meet this vicious challenge four square and confidently propound the greatness of the timeless principles of Hindutva. The Sangh itself was quite a small force at that time.

It was in such adverse circumstances that Shri Guruji rose like the morning star on the national firmament. He not only checked the flood of anti-nationalism but successfully invoked intense pride in their Hindu identity among the Hindu people. The three evil tendencies at work in those days were de-Hinduisation, de-nationalisation and national disintegration. Shri Guruji sought successfully to convince the people that such forces would eventually destroy the country. His exposition was forceful and positive. With vigour and scholarship he propounded that projecting the Hindu view of life was nothing less than Bharat's eternal global mission. His speeches were not only replete with erudition and solid undisputable facts and oratory, but his words came from the depths of his heart and carried the stamp of his own life of utter purity and dedication to that Cause. As such they would stirup the deepest emotions of self-pride among the listeners.

The *Mantra* of national renaissance that Shri Guruji carried to the four corners of the country infused new life into the crest fallen Hindu mind. If today Hindus from Kashmir to Kanyakumari take legitimate pride in their Hinduness and stand up in an organised manner proclaiming in thundering tones pride in their Hindu identity it is largely due to Shri Guruji's valiant and tireless tirade against the forces of de-Hinduisation.

Beyond Social Controversies

When the founder-Sarasanghachalak Dr. Hedgewar declared the ancient truth that ours is a Hindu nation, some people even called him

mad. After political independence in 1947, the so- called intellectuals and self-appointed leaders had widely propagated that the Sangh's Hindu nation ideology was communal, retrogressive, divisive and parochial. But Shri Guruji succeeded in forging during his own lifetime a tremendous, disciplined force that had the courage to insist on the truth that the concept of Hindu Nation can alone afford an enduring, positive basis for an integrated, forward looking national life inspired with a great national life mission. That a single man could achieve this in such a large measure in a huge country like ours speaks of the superhuman qualities and capacity of his leadership.

Those who called Shri Guruji controversial tried to portray him as a champion of outdated, obscurantist, anti-social Hindu customs like the caste-system and ritualism. They said he had neither any knowledge nor experience of the needs and problems of modern society. Even today many people can be seen quoting Shri Guruji out of context to serve their own purposes. It appears flinging charges against the Sangh has become a favourite pastime for them. But the Sangh is a ball that rebounds with redoubled force with which it is struck. The Government even tried to uproot the Sangh thrice by hurling every, conceivable kind of charges against it and banning it. But, with its roots watered to its depths by the nectar of devotion for the motherland, the Sangh not only did not wither away but has grown into a luxuriant, giant Banyan tree. It was Sri Guruji who had nursed the sapling of Sangh, amidst all such tempests and upheavals.

As far as the allegation that Shri Guruji and the Sangh were revivalist, that he wanted to bring back all kinds of anti-progressive customs of the past, Shri Guruji put the whole record straight by saying that our ancestors had brought about a social order consistent with those times and taking into account the physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs of man, and which had lasted for a quite a long time. It had also resulted in a noble, cultured life style of people spread all over in the entire country. He also warned of the tendency to condemn our ancestors for evolving systems which we now consider as out of date, or retrogressive. If, in course of time, this social structure has now got distorted we will have to build a new system that will be in tune with the present times. And none would be sorry for the passing out of the old order either. He also said it is

like some branches of a tree withering and falling away on becoming old and dry. He said the Gita too has preached the revolutionary concept that our actions must be *yugānukul* i.e. — in tune with the times. It will be seen, therefore, the charge that Shri Guruji was a revivalist was without any factual foundation whatsoever. At the same time, Shri Guruji forcefully argued that whatever the new social model we may evolve, its moorings should be rooted in the time-tested values of our national life so that our life-mission of ensuring the welfare of entire mankind, leading up to its final divine consummation can continue unhindered.

Comprehensive View-Point

At the study camp at Thane Shri Guruji had analysed in detail the various modern ideologies like socialism, communism, capitalism, democracy and so on, and had convincingly pointed out that Hindu life-philosophy alone could make for a happy and worthwhile human life. In a very cogent style, he had placed the Hindu concept of Integral Humanism, in the context of the modern challenges facing the mankind. He was unfaltering in his faith that furnishing a firm spiritual basis of mutual human relationship was Bharat's unique gift to humanity, and that it was the only possible solution for the myriad problems of the conflict-ridden world.

As spiritual oneness of mankind was Shri Guruji's basic theme, there could never be any trace of hatred or illwill in his heart towards anybody. He certainly used harsh words for certain sections of Muslims, and Christians, but never against their religions. On the contrary, he used to refer to Jesus Christ and Mohammed Paigambar with due reverence. What he attacked was the intolerant, anti-national and destructive attitude of many of their followers.

There was a fundamental difference between his way to solve the Muslims and Chrisitian problem and the way of those who took to the policy of pampering of minorities with an eye on their vote-bank. Shri Guruji only felt that all should identify themselves with the national, i.e., the Hindu mainstream even while remaining free to practise their own religious practices at the personal level. Pandit Nehru was, as is well known, an advocate of a `composite culture,' He believed that to consider Indian culture as essentially 'Hindu' would make it difficult

to bring all others also on a common national platform. In his meetings with Pt. Nehru during 1957-58, Shri Guruji had given the example of Ganga and said even though other rivers had joined the Ganga, its name did not change, it has remained as Ganga. Hindu culture is also such a vast stream, in which many sects new and old, were included, but they could not be considered apart from the main stream of Hindu Culture. Really speaking Nehru's liberalism was also rooted in the Hindu psyche, which is acclaimed the world over as the most liberal and all inclusive one. Shri Guruji had a frank exchange of views with him. But the differences in their views had not led to any bitterness in Shri Guruji's mind. Reporting these meetings to Sangh workers, Shri Guruji once said, ``Nehruji speaks such chaste Hindi that I had to be on guard lest I use some Urdu or English words." He thus always appreciated what was good in others.

The question why the Sangh has restricted itself to organisation only of the Hindus has been answered by him many times before. Shri Guruji's answer was simple and straight forward; first let us put our own house in order because that is our very first need; including others is a matter of next stage of development at the social and organisational level. There is not a single instance of any Christian or Muslim who came into contact with Shri Guruji calling him a fanatic. Shri Guruji never objected to multiplicity of modes of worship. In this respect, he used to say, the Hindu is really `secular' so far as the political, economic and such other spheres were concerned. He was also always against sectarian separatism while serving humanity. Social service relates to relief for the poor and the down-trodden, the sick and the afflicted, and victims of natural or man-made calamities like floods, earth-quakes, train accidents etc. He said there could be no genuine social service that is motivated by mere religious or secretarian considerations. In fact, he said, such motivated service to humanity would be inhuman. If somebody is drowning he should be saved not because he is a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian but because he is a human being. This is what Hindu culture teaches - and he himself lived every word of it. It was such a towering and transparent personality that vested interests tried to paint in colours of narrow mindedness, fanaticism and what not! No wonder in course of time they failed utterly in their designs.

Holistic Hindu View of Life

Efforts at distorting Shri Guruji's endeavors for national regeneration through awakening of its unique cultural identity was mainly done by Communists. Shri Guruji never spared them while commenting on their crass materialism on an ideological level and sought to demolish it root and branch. An important reason for this was that although there were materialistic socialists congressites and such others,. none had claimed to present a philosophy that was completely un-Indian and their field of activities was limited merely to the prevailing economic and social conditions. On the other hand, the followers of the Communist ideology imported from Russia claimed that it was a global ideology and was the panacea for all social ills. Since Marxism claimed to be a complete philosophy of life, accepting it only meant rejection of Bharatiya values of life based on spirituality and accepting that the human being is a mere economic animal. Owning up such an ideology, which is completely contrary to a philosophy of life would, Shri Guruji added, only spell the end of the unique identity of our Hindu national life.

Shri Guruji also authoritatively expounded how acceptance of the irreligious, materialistic, dictatorial and intolerant dogmas of Marxism could prove dangerous for the eternal Hindu view of life beneficial to mankind. He said the very fact that Communism had failed in Russia, the very country of its first adoption in state-craft proved that it was a hollow ideology.

Shri Guruji explained, how the Communist countries are forced to forgo their pet-dictums and to give concessions after concessions forced by the natural propensities of human nature. Nor have they been able to give up the basis of nationalism. Russia had accepted in actual conduct of its policies that patriotism can alone be the basis of a nation all-round progress. Shri Guruji silenced the Communists by pointing out that when Germany attacked Russia during the second World War and the latter was faced with all round defeat it was the patriotic appeal in the name of their 'fatherland' and its past heroic emperors that proved effective in rousing the Russians to heights of valour and sacrifice and eventually defeat the German forces. On the contrary, when China invaded Bharat in 1962, the Communists of West Bengal in a way justified the aggression saying that the borders between Bharat and China had always remained undecided.

Shri Guruji also never failed to warn the country against being drawn into any of the two power blocks. He also said that we should be wary of Communism because it would try to tie us as slaves, to the Russian post. He emphasised that the concept of conflict-based classification of society into `haves' and `have-nots' was against the spirit of integral Hindu philosophy which considers the entire society as a living, organic entity. Inciting class hatred could therefore never lead to a happy and harmonious social structure. The basis for achieving the happiness of the whole society could be possible only on a comprehensive and harmonious basis and never on a divisive one. It is well known that diversity is inherent in nature. Hindu philosophy was realistic and unlike the Marxist fallacy, had accepted diversity in human nature and given every individual the chance to progress in the light of his own special aptitudes and capacities.

It can be safely said that Shri Guruji's philosophical and nationalist assaults on Marxism did play quite a significant role in rendering it ineffective in our country. Shri Guruji held that the needs of every individual should be fulfilled, the hiatus of social inequality be bridged and uncontrolled hoarding prevented. If as against this wholesome philosophical backdrop the Communists remained opposed to Shri Guruji and continued to indulge in trading charges against him, it only meant that their bookish loyalty and political considerations had clouded their independence of thinking and actions in the interests of the nation.

Warning about Elections

Elections were also made a pretext for dragging Shri Guruji into controversy. Once we became politically independent, elections had cast their dark shadows over the whole gamut of our national life. Being obsessed with politics no aspect of the society remained untouched by it. Even in remote villages politics created barriers between man and man. People also have begun to look only to the Government for fulfillment of everyone of their needs. As a result, the spirit of self-reliance has gradually declined. For workers and leaders in the political field nothing else mattered apart from power politics. Even 'service' has become vote-oriented. In such a situation, many such political groups wanted to secure the help of a powerful organisation like the Sangh. But Shri Guruji, on his part, remained firm in keeping

the Sangh scrupulously aloof from the mire of power politics. This aloofness immensely helped the Sangh to sustain its independence and grow according to its national perspective. Dr. Hedgewar, the founder of the Sangh, had already accepted two basic principles in his own life and insisted on the Swayamsevaks' strict adherence to them. They were fearless and uncompromising advocacy of Hindu Nation, and aloofness from day-to-day politics and race for power.

Shri Guruji not only kept these principles intact but became an erudite commentator on them. Many people tried to tag on the Sangh to the Jana Sangh and indulged in the tendentious propaganda that the two were just two sides of the same coin and complementary to each other. Some newspapers, indulging in kite-flying, even reported that Shri Guruji was going to contest elections! But Shri Guruji kept on forcefully repeating that no organisation could take to the enduring task of national rejuvenation if it was subject to the ever changing pulls and pushes of power politics. He even warned the leaders of the Jana Sangh that they should disabuse their minds if they were under the impression that the Sangh Swayamsevaks would work as volunteers of the Jana Sangh. He also added that Swayamsevaks engaged in other fields should always conduct themselves in accordance with the Sangh's philosophy of thought and action.

Shri Guruji was basically a nation-builder, never a politician. So he was free to speak out the truth fearlessly, even if it was bitter, if it was in the interest of the country. While criticising the anti-national policies he never compromised under political pressure while suggesting alternative solutions to the national problems. He also never differentiated between the Congress and the Jana Sangh, or the Communist labour movement and the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. While talking to a leader of the BMS, he firmly said, ``collective bargaining is a highway robbery."

Shri Guruji had once met Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri when Shastri was the Home Minister. Before this meeting there was a demonstration before him, in which thousands of demonstrators had displayed banners saying `Hindus, awake', in opposition to Bangladesh infiltration into Assam. On this background, naturally that question came up in the meeting. Shastriji said it was difficult to identify the Muslim infiltrators because they mixed with the local Muslims. Thereupon Shri Guruji

suggested that local citizens should be warned that those who sheltered infiltrators would be severely dealt with and disenfranchised. If they did not respond they too would be driven out. At the same time, Shri Guruji told Shastriji ``Probably you would not be able to do this, because it is not in keeping with the election arithmetic of the Congress party." Finally, this was precisely what happened. As time passed, the problem has become more and ever more serious.

It was Sri Guruji's firm resolve to keep the Sangh away from political and all other types of fissiparous tendencies that endowed him with singular success in the building up of such a vast reservoir of youth power infused with a spirit of innate national oneness. For Shri Guruji, man came first, never the chair. He had undertaken the tremendous task of pulling individual after individual out of the snare of greed and sensual pursuits and energising him with the spirit to conquer all odds in life-whether internal or external. Had this not been so the country would not have had hundreds of selfless and capable *pracharaks* and even house holders working constructively all their life in various fields of activity without any regard to their own personal joys or sorrows and expectations of any kind of material gain or even name or fame.

Goodwill towards even Opponents

When people with vested interests saw that Shri Guruji was an obstacle in their path of pursuing their game of power politics and that the Sangh could neither be tempted nor frightened they naturally tried to drag both Shri Guruji and the Sangh in the mire of controversies. Actually, Shri Guruji had a heart vast as the sky, and deep as the ocean. Even when he differed with anybody he believed in '*Vayam Panchadhikam Shatam*'. Even during the fierce assault on the Sangh in the wake of Gandhiji's tragic assassination, he had directed Swayamsevaks to remain calm and not to get provoked or to relatiate; and whenever help was needed, Shri Guruji was the first to offer his hand of co-operation to the Government whichever, party was in power.

He would emphasise on one's readiness for selfless service, because that was simply one's primary duty. And, at the same time, service simply must be silent and self-effacing. It must neither be advertised nor must it carry a price tag. An incident in Gwalior in May 1972 is worth calling in this regard.

Shri Guruji was presented with a copy of a book titled, `*Rashtriya Suraksha Morcha*', which was a collection of information of various kinds of assistance rendered by the Swayamsevaks towards the war efforts during the Indo-Pak war in 1971. Shri Guruji glanced through the pages, and remarked." I cannot appreciate a book like this. Will it be proper if a son, after serving his mother, says I would like to give proper advertisement of my services to her? Whatever the Swayamsevaks do for their motherland will be only by way of their natural duty. Then why advertise it?" At the time of the partition, as also during national calamities from time to time, the Sangh Swayamsevaks had made limitless sacrifices including martyrdom. They had helped one and all, including many eminent people even from the Congress. The Army Officers too had praised the Sangh for its invaluable services during the wars with Pakistan and with China. But Shri Guruji never tried to derive any type of capital out of it. The Sangh never cared to know if anybody had assessed the value of service it had rendered. Shri Guruji also never thought of exploiting Hindutva for political purposes. He was of the opinion that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad should not be tagged on to any political party.

It was indeed a great misfortune for the country that in spite of the best efforts of Sri Guruji that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Congress, which remained continuously in power since independence, could not forge a friendly and complementary relationship based on an understanding of each other. The only exception which lasted for a short time, was when Lal Bahadur Shastri was in power.

Shri Guruji had a harmonious relationship based on a mutual appreciation and understanding with Shastri and Patel. This did not mean they agreed with him on all counts, but they were impressed by his patriotism, his liberal views on social affairs, transparent sincerity, his capacity to predict possible calamities and his tireless efforts to alert the nation from time to time.

During his countrywide tours in 1949 after the ban on the Sangh was lifted, Shri Guruji had met many leaders and eminent personalities holding varied opinions such as Dr. Ambedkar, Gopal Swamy Iyengar, Kakasaheb Gadgil, Dr. M. K. Dhar and so on. Also when he wrote letters on occasions of personal joy or grief to persons he did not discriminate on the basis of their views or beliefs, political or otherwise.

The deep affection with which he wrote to Swayamsevaks when some one in their family died was also evident in his condolence letter to Pt. Nehru on the death of Shri Phiroz Gandhi. Shri Guruji was a true *Jaganmitra*, a friend of all, not merely in words or feelings but in his actual behaviour too.

Shri Guruji felt that co-operation with others was always possible if one had sincere willingness to serve the country and a clean unprejudiced mind. Prime Minister Nehru had unleashed a veritable propaganda barrage against the Sangh, and Smt. Indira Gandhi had left even her father far behind in this respect. But Shri Guruji did not lose his balance, nor his self-respect and freedom of thought being scared of their opposition. His correspondence with the Government during the Sangh ban in 1948 stands as a glowing testimony to this aspect of his nature. He never had any occasion to meet. Smt. Indira Gandhi in person, but he always spoke about her with respect.

A telling instance of this was his reference to her after the war of 1971. While addressing a mamoth public meeting in Bangalore on Feb. 4, 1973, he referred to her as `Our Socialist and Secular Prime Minister' and said, ``Even she and others like herself had to accept that our country has an ancient tradition of over 5,000 years and that we are not going to buckle under anybody's threats." This is precisely what we also have been saying all these years. Membership of the Sangh is limited to men, but our Prime Minister Indiraji has spoken just like a member of the Sangh. She has expressed the same sentiments that the Sangh has been trying to awaken among the people for the past many years. This has indeed made me very happy."

Once a lady from Madras remarked that Shri Guruji did not like to meet women, nor would even talk to them. In this regard Shri Guruji remarked `That is quite true'. I do not meet or talk to any woman as such, but I do meet and talk to the motherhood in her". It is no wonder that as in all other spheres also this essence of Bharatiya view of womanhood ingrained in his nature should have deeply touched and stirred the hearts of our countrymen.

Although Shri Guruji was a powerful and effective orator, the chief instruments that he was trying to mould for the task of national awakening were the Sangh and its workers and Swayamsevaks. Collection of his speeches at the Sangh camps and assemblies are

available in plenty, which highlight, in detail, the sterling qualities required of every Sangh worker and Swayamsevak. His constant theme was that the success of any work carried out by a Swayamsevak solely depends on the noble qualities he had cultivated in himself. He also would interestingly narrate instances from our cultural tradition to the importance of cultivating noble qualities.

Cultivate Noble Qualities

There was no point in being a `political' or a 'reactionary' Hindu, he would say. He urged that we should cultivate qualities that the Hindu tradition has considered worthy of esteem and emulation by others. He looked upon the motherland as the corporate manifestation of God, and the mother of all the sublime virtues as a veritable mother of the Universe. He urged the cultivation of not only the necessary physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities but also knowledge of the Hindu view of life. Every word, he said, was directed towards imparting all such right *samskaras* in the minds of the Swayamsevaks.

Sri Guruji used to point out that Bharat had produced innumerable greatmen during its history of thousands of years, and their biographies were treasure-house of such qualities and virtues. Towards this purpose in his speeches he made liberal use of stories from great men's lives. His oratory was engrossing, forceful, logical and on a high moral level. For lakhs of people who listened to him it provided a unique, captivating experience of national awareness and a new view of life worthy of a noble human being.

Now, of course the efforts to prove Shri Guruji controversial have all vanished into thin air. There is now not a shadow of doubt that the truth he propounded all his life would sooner than later would take shape in reality in all the affairs of our natural life. Generations to come will undoubtedly gratefully remember that it was Shri Guruji who made it possible to such a great extent.

21 THE NATION'S TRIBUTES

The fulsome homage paid to Shri Guruji on his demise by eminent personalities in every walk of national life made it clear that the controversies about him were reduced to ashes along with his mortal frame and his unique contribution to the nation's life shone in all splendour. Making a significant departure from parlimentary practice both Houses of Parliament paid tributes to this great man, who was a member of neither House. The following selected tributes highlight the greatness of this classic confluence of Man and Mission.

Eminent Saints and Religious Leaders

Acharya Vinoba Bhave described him as "a leader with broad national outlook, who always thought on an all-India level. Shri Golwalkar had faith in spiritualism and had great regard for all religious faiths. He did not have a narrow view of any religion. In fact he had respect for Islam and only expected the Muslims to join the national mainstream."

Puri Shankaracharya Shri Niranjandas Tirtha praised his work of organising the Hindu Society and his efforts to remove the blemish of cow-slaughter from the fair face of the nation.

Kanchi Shankaracharya Shri Jayendra Saraswati lauded Shri Guruji's efforts "to serve Hindu Dharma, Hindu Sanskriti and Hindu Nation till his last breath" and called him 'an ascetic in white.'.

Swami Karpatri, founder of Dharma Sangh, said "Shri Guruji's service to the Hindu Nation and Society will be remembered by posterity and will inspire us to follow in his footsteps."

Jain Saint Acharya Tulsi lauded his great love for Bharatiya Culture, his constant emphasis on national character as well as his organisational capacity.

Jain Acharya Muni Sushil Kumar described him as "a great man of culture", and added, "Shri Golwalkar Guruji was greatly needed during the present hard times through which the country is passing. The entire nation will ever remain indebted to him for his service to the nation and its culture."

Leading Political Figures

President V. V. Giri : "A deeply religious man with great organising ability."

Vice-President G. S. Pathak : Shri Guruji had completely dedicated his life at the altar of the natiion. He did great work for reforming Hindu Culture.

Loksabha Speaker Shri G. S. Dhillon : Due to his towering personality and his great erudition Shri Guruji occupied the pride of place among the nation's thinkers.

Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi : "Shri Golwalkar, an eminent personality who was not a member of the House, is no more. He held a respected position in national life by force of his personality and the intensity of his conviction, even though many of us could not agree with him."

Congress (O) Leader Shri S. N. Mishra : He was a great thinker, a *Karma Yogi,* and a self-realised soul. His character and his personality were sources of inspiration.

Shri Jagjivan Ram, Defence Minister of India : In the death of RSS Chief Shri Golwalkar India has lost a leader who had organising ability and the capacity to suffer for the cause he held dear.

Socialist Leader Shri S. M. Joshi : A '*tapasvi*', a personality with indomitable determination for a glorious future for India.

Socialist Party Leader Shri Samar Guha : He was a great patriot and instilled a sense of dedication and service in thousands of young men during the past forty years.

Akali Dal Leader Jathedar Santosh Singh : Shri Guruji was a 'Maha Purush', Man like him become immortal. His passing away is a great loss for the Sikh Panth. When one stood before him one forgot Hindu-Sikh differences.

Marxist Leader Shri Taqi Rehman : Althogh I never met Shri Guruji I have seen his vision of a glorious future for the nation inspiring his followers.

Patna Congress Leader Shri Hafizuddin Qureshi : He was really a great man. Those who did not come into contact with him had a wrong impression about him. He was neither communal nor anti-Muslim.

Muslims are being misled into thinking that the Sangh is against them. Shri Guruji stood for equal rights and religious freedom.

Shiv Sena Leader Shri Bal Thackeray : Like the captain of a ship Shri Golwalkar streered the ship of the Sangh through many adversities with great skill.

Chief of Rashtra Sevika Samiti Smt. Mausi Kelkar : Bharat has lost the focal point of national strength based on Hindutva.

Bharatiya Jana Sangh President Shri L. K. Advani was in tears while paying his tribute. He said Guruji was the Swami Vivekananda of modern times. He was dedicated to the creation of a great Bharat. In partriotism and selfless service he was a source of inspiration for lakhs of young men.

Jana Sangh Leader Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee : Shri Guruji spent every atom of his energy and every moment of his life to make the Hindu Society realise its identity, which it had forgotten, and make it organised and strong. That the Hindu Society is now awake and strong enough to resist any aggression on it is the result of his ceaseless '*Sadhana*' and unparallelled organisational ability.

Shri Jai Prakash Narayan declared while addressing a condolence meeting in Patna that Shri Guruji was an outstanding spiritual soul. It is a great truth that we are Bharatiya, Bharat has an ancient tradition, and this will be the basis of our national reconstruction. However modern we become, we shall never be called American, French, English or German. We shall always remain Bharatiya. Revered Guruji had awakened this sense of national identity in thousands of young men.

The Media

'The Times of India', Mumbai : For lakhs of his followers Shri Guruji was another Swami Vivekananda and a venerated protector of Hindutva, while his innumerable critics looked upon him as the dictator of Hindutva. Still it cannot be denied that he was an advocate of strength who wanted a strong and united India that would forge ahead without giving up it's glorious historic identity.

'The Indian Express', Delhi : He was a great scholar of Indian history and was greatly concerned about the security of the country's

northern and eastern borders. He was one of those very few people who could never accept the idea of partition. He wanted Indian Muslims to merge in the national mainstream.

'The Tribune', Chandigarh : If personality is like the perfume of a person, the late Shri Golwalkar certainly had an extroardinary personality.

'The Mail', Madras : Guruji Golwalkar's philosophy of Hindu nationalism was to build up a nation through the right 'Sanskar', to inculcate a spirit of devotion to the motherland and pride in our history.

'The Pioneer', Lucknow : Shri Guruji led a life of dedication. Calling such a great patriot narrow-minded or communal is an injustice to him. He propounded the principle that only a united nation could become a powerful nation.

'The Deccan Chronicle', Hyderabad : "Like Swami Vivekananda he was the embodiment of the spirit of India. He was energy personified, and sefless action was his message. He was a genuine nationalist who did not look for inspiration to foreign lands and foreign ideologies.

'Blitz', Mumbai : "He had no axe to grind, and in the pursuit of his ideals languor was not in his heart, weakness was not in his word, weariness was not on his brow. It would be good if other political leaders emulate his example of dedicated life and win the respect and confidence of his followers."

'Mother India', Mumbai : "Here was a man cast in the mould of our immortal Rishis like Vyas, Valmiki, Ramdas, Tulsidas, Tukaram, Vivekananda and a thousand others. Can such a man die? No! This is one death that builds a shrine of memory in our hearts for the rest of our lives. These Rishis never die. They live in the eternity of time and come closer to us every day. Like many Rishis before him Guruji was also a child of Hinduism, the Religion Eternal, which has a covenant with God to bless this ancient land with such pilgrims of virtue and noble ideals at regular intervals."

'Navbharat Times', Delhi (Hindi) : No nation can be transformed into a strong nation so long as the set of virtues prominently present in the life of Shri Golwalkar is not present in it. Guru Golwalkar was one of those personalities whose greatness can be described as 'virat'.

'Dinmaan', Delhi (Hindi) : During his lifetime he tried to bring together all the religious heads of different sects in the Hindu Society to carve out a new path acceptable to all, and which could bind the entire society in a common bond.

'Aaj', Banaras (Hindi) : Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh cannot be charged with communalism. The credit of keeping the Sangh aloof from active politics goes to Shri Golwalkar's personality and high ideals. He was like a Rishi, and his concept of Hindu Rashtra was as noble as that of Swami Vivekananda, Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Shri Aurobindo.

'Rajasthan Patrika', Jaipur (Hindi) : He was unique and powerful personality. He had an ideology of his own and a large number of people followed him in their commitment to it. Even those who were bitterly against the concept of Hindu Nationalism praised his erudition.

'Sanmarg', Culcutta : In his death India has lost a great leader and guide. He was very much needed for preservation of Hindu religion and culture. He was a watchful sentinel of nationalism and was ceaselessly engaged in awakening the national spirit.

'Punjab Kesari', Jalandhar : Guruji's dedication to the work of the Sangh can be seen from the fact that till 7.30 before his death he considered himself well enough to participate in the daily prayer along with the Swayamsevaks.

'Richi Express', Ranchi : In modern times, after Mahatma Gandhi Shri Golwalkar was the only person whose personality and actions influenced millions of people.

'Navjyoti Herald', Jaipur : Contrary to the propaganda carried on against him by interested parties, Golwalkar had nothing to do with religions fanaticism and blind communalism. He toiled hard to make the Hindus understand the priceless heritage of Hinduism. He wanted them to know that they were the inheritors of a moral, spiritual and religious tradition, the earliest in the history of civilisation.

'Prabuddha Bharat', Almora : Now the controversies about Shri Golwalkar have been reduced to ashes and his pure character shines brightly. His life is now an open book for all to read. You may not have agreed with him on many points. This does not matter any more. What matters is that you here find a man, a character, that is spotless,

fearless. He lived not for himself but entirely for others. At any time, about how many men in this world can this be said? Still the greatest service Shri Golwalkar rendered to India and her people was that he upheld certain values by practice and precept, which this nation needs for its survival and well-ordered growth. When most of the ardent and well-meaning political leaders of the country were talking of and working for river-valley projects, industrialisation, family planning, higher standards of living and so on, he was practising and preaching discipline, strength, fearlessness, character, sacrificial service, dynamic patriotism, without which none of the aforesaid modern objectives could ensure a better future for India. Above all in these days of open 'Watergates' of indiscipline and fastering corruption in more places than we may know, Shri Golwalkar left behind him desciplined men of character all over India.

'Loksatta', Mumbai (Marathi) : To rise above lust for power is difficult even for great men. Hence it is that every political party of every country without exception takes interest in the struggle for power. The Sarsanghchalak had turned his face away from power and had led his personal like in accordance with it, thus giving a definite direction to Sangh work.

'Kesari', Pune (Marathi) : He offered the flower of his life at the feet of the immortal nation. As the river Ganga merges into the sea, so did the wide stream of his flawless work meet the ocean of his countrymen and become one with it.

'Sakal', Pune (Marathi) : Even his opponents found his faith in his work, his patriotism and his devotion to social well-being quite beyond doubt. He has placed before us the ideal of a life of total dedication and sacrifice.

'Maharashtra Times' Mumbai (Marathi) : Golwalkar Guruji had the strength of the Sangh behind him, but he did not even dream of using it for political bargaining. He had politely turned down Sardar Patel's invitation to join the Congress. Where, now, are people who would remain loyal to their ideal and dedicate their lives to service of the Society?

'Manus', Pune (Marathi) : It has been a favourite idea with Indian thinkers in respect of administration and social structure that a class

of saints, unattached to power of any kind, should work for the good of the nation. Even though in modern times it was Gandhiji who had declared the desirability of this principle it was Shri Guruji alone who had done his utmost to bring it into practice.

'Gujarati Samachar', Ahmedabad (Gujarati) : The country has lost a powerful exponent of nationalism.

'Jansatta', Ahmedabad : He was a shining light in the tradition of Pandit Malaviya and Swami Vivekananda, and carried on their tradition as an exponent of Nationalism.

'Matruhumi', Trivandrum (Malayalam) : The work that Shri Guruji did proves that the young generation can be inspired towards social service, which is much higher than shouting slogans. Even those who do not accept his ideology and criticise it have to bow their heads before his sense of dedication and his integrity.

'Manorama', (Malayalam) : With Shri Guruji's death a powerful personality in the nation's life has disappeared. He created a service force of disciplined young men.

'Malayalam Express', Trivandram : Our country had a tradition of dedication to the ideal of emancipation through renunciation. This is the Rishi tradition, and it also firmly believes that national progress should be achieved through organised social strength rather than through political power. The lives of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Shri Ramakrishnadev, Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji and Shri Golwalkar prove that even in modern times this tradition continues unbroken.

'Dinmani', Madras (Tamil) : The service rendered by him as the Chief of the RSS is unique. His success in inculcating good qualities like devotion to God, devotion to country, spirit of sacrifice, discipline etc., in removing the tears from the eyes of the poor and making them work as the sentinels of the Society, is unparalleled.

'Kalki' : Guruji was one of those great men who fight for their ideals and dedicate their lives to them.

'Prajavani', Bangalore (Kannada) : The Hindu Nationhood propounded by him was not sectarian but national. He believed that all those who had implicit faith in and who gloried in the culture and traditions of the country, looking upon it as their motherland, were undoubtedly Hindus.

'Udayvani', Manipal : Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar was a vital force that shines once in centuries. He created a whole generation dedicated to national culture. People like him are the nation's glory and a shining chapter in history.

'Samaj', Cuttack : The great mission of his life was to restore India to its glorious position from which it had miserably fallen in modern times. He had extraordinary organising capacity and, like Shivaji nursed the dream of building up a powerful country.

'Alok', Guwahati : The current of awakening the Hindu Society, which had forgotten its identity, that he initiated with flow for ever in this country.

The success that Shri Guruji achieved as the Sarsanghchalak of Rashtreeya Swayamsevak Sangh is undoubtedly unique. But then, what was the secret of his success? Was it due to his towering intellectual versatatility or his superb oratorical skill? Was it his compassionate heart that could move and influence lakhs of his conutrymen or his boundless oceanic knowledge? Or was it the glow of his inner self radiating from his countenance?

As we go deeper, we realise that there have been many who possessed one or more of such qualities. There had also been many who took pride in Hindutva and also spoke in the same vein. The concept of Hindutva too was a new invention of Shri Guruji. Then, what was that uniqueness about him that made him so very appealing as one loved and revered by the people? To all such questions, there is but one answer, equally applicable to Dr. Hedgevar and Shri Guruji.

One With the Society

The answer is: Shri Guruji showered his nectar of love over the people throughout his country-wide tours and received in return unstinted love and adoration from them. All his other exceptional traits added further grace to his personality, that is all. By nature, Shri Guruji preferred to be left alone in seclusion for meditation. His spiritual bent of mind would often long for the Himalayan peaks and caves. In fact, through a rigorous practice of Yoga and meditation in a secluded, spiritually attuned atmosphere, he had not only sought to reach the liberated-Mukta-state but had acquired quite advanced Yogic powers too. But the destiny had willed otherwise. He was to be an instrument for the uplift of the powers too. But the destiny had willed otherwise. He was to be an instrument for the uplift of the entire Hindu society and the humanity at large and not merely of one individual Madhav. So the moment Shri Guruji came in contact with Dr. Hedgewar, he turned his back to his deeply felt aspiration for his personal liberation.

Shri Guruji has taken the vow of complete sacrifice in the cause of the Sangh, which he pursued with single-minded devotion till his

very last breath. For him, the motherland and the society had become the living manifestation of God, and every individual a spark of that Divinity and worthy of his service. His spirit of dedication was so total and unreserved that he became one with the object of his worship, and his personality, as an individual had simply merged in the 'body social'. Once, when the well-known Hindi journal *Dharmayug* requested him to send, under his signature, the motto of his life, he wrote just four simple words ``Main nahee thu hee'' (Not I, but Thou). For him, these four simple words conveyed his complete self-effacement as an individual and total surrender to the will of Divine. He believed that when man forgets his individual ego his heart becomes as vast as the sky and it is only then that he can serve the society with the fullest dedication. When man attains this state he rises above all types of self-centrerd motivation. Once the lower self is left behind, man rises above the lesser desires that bind him down and his spirit soars to the divinity manifest in the humanity around him.

Shri Guruji was a living example of saint Dnyaneshwar's famous words - "Love comes first, words follow next". Shri Guruji once said that in the beginning days he had the ego of scholarship and often took delight in demolishing the other person's arguments with cutting words. But when he came into contact with Doctorji and experienced his extreme humility and his extraordinary virtues he moulded himself accordingly, Doctorji had proved that even human nature, supposed to be unchangeable, could be changed in the desired direction - provided he surrenders himself to his chosen mission in life completely — Shri Guruji too emulated Doctorji's example to the hilt. Both these two great men made no concessions to themselves in the pursuit of their mission. They neither thought of physical comforts nor did they ever shirk from physical hardships. In all respects, Doctorji was an organiser *par excellence,* and Shri Guruji raised himself to the same stature. It happened many times that Doctorji was engrossed in Sangh work in spite of running high temperature. His dedication was so complete that even in a state of delirium he was found talking about Sangh work. It was the same with Shri Guruji, who made his body work for the Sangh mercilessly despite the deadly affliction like cancer. Towards others, however, these two men of steel like will had nothing but the softest sentiments of love. To shower love without expecting anything in return was second nature with both. They could mould people

because they could enter their hearts through sheer love. They had crossed the limitations of logic and intellect and taken the course of love as a result of which they could not only conquer the hearts of people but awaken the essential goodness inherent in them in the cause of social service.

It would therefore be no exaggeration to say that Shri Guruji was a conqueror of people's hearts, but the weapon of his conquest was love. He toured the entire country twice every year, and this he did for 33 continuous years. Every time newer and newer people came into his contact and they all became his very own. He knew that neither discussions nor arguments would motivate a man to action; it was constant and affectionate personal contact that was needed. Shri Guruji was not only a living embodiment of a loving nature but a Banyan tree of cool shade under which all those around him happily took shelter.

Shri Guruji travelled over the entire country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Mumbai to Guwahati for nearly 75 times. During these travels he stayed with many people and never in any high-class hotel. The family he stayed with verily became his own family for ever. He never forgot them, nor did they forget him. The children in the family looked upon him just as an elder member of the family and played with him freely. While in the company of children he became a child himself. On such occasions all high-flown ideological discussions were forgotten. It was a matter of great happiness and also of surprise for the people in the family to see such a great national leader playing with children without a trace of ego. Because of such behaviuor on Shri Guruji's part the host never felt even a trace of mental pressure that would normally be caused by the arrival of an eminent guest. He would take special care to see that because of his stay no inconvenience is caused to the family members. It made no difference to Shri Guruji whether he stayed in a poor man's hut or a rich mansion. Wherever he stayed he became one with the family. At the time of his departure he would always touch the feet of the elders in the family and seek their blessings. No wonder such a gesture of humility brought tears of happiness to the host's eyes.

Once Shri Guruji visited Mohipura a Vanvasi village on the banks of the Narmada where his *Gurubandhu Swami Amrutananda* had a

small cottage by way of an *ashram*. Shri Guruji stayed in the cottage with Swamiji. At meals time Pt. Ramnarayan Shastri of Indore brought a number of delicious dishes but Swamiji opined that it would be more in the fitness of things to accept the hospitality of the local tribals. Shri Guruji readily agreed and directed that the rich food brought by Shastri be distributed among the local population. He then went to a tribal's house and sat down on the ground in the company of the locals for meals. He happily ate the simple food that was served and heartily praised it. It reminded one of Sri Rama's enjoying the fruit, *bair,* offered by Shabari. As a result, when he left the village every tribal had tears in his eyes.

Shri Guruji's depth of affection would make persons coming into his contact also feel drawn to him. This was the magic with which he could draw people into the Sangh on such a massive scale, rising above all apparent differences. In Jabalpur, he used to stay with a friend who was a Communist. When asked how he could stay with such a person, Shri Guruji replied they were old friends and their friendship dated even before he came into the Sangh and his friend was also not a Communist at that time. He said friendship was a valuable bond and it should never be snapped. He also remarked, ``It is not that men do not change in their opinions. So why not hope that one day our Communist friend also might accept the philosopy of the Sangh?'

Rising Above Differences of Opinion

Shri Guruji firmly believed that difference of opinion need not give rise to bitterness or enimity in mutual relationship, and he practised what he preached. Once there was a public meeting on the Red Fort grounds in Delhi to celebrate Sardar Patel Jayanti. Dr. Radhakrishnan was in the Chair and Shri Guruji was one of the speakers. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was also among the speakers. After the meeting was over, Shri Guruji embraced Dr. Lohia and said he had wanted to see him for a long time. Then they held each other's hands and began to converse like old friends. Those who watched were amazed at this sight, as the sharp differences between the views of the two leaders were well known. When someone later on asked Dr. Lohia about it he replied, 'I had a very wrong notion about Shri Guruji, but I was really happy to personally meet him today." Shri Guruji's meetings with Swami Karpatri Maharaj were also similarly remarkable. For, whenever

Shri Guruji met Karpatriji he prostrated himself before the saffron-clad *Sanyasi.*

Shri Guruji's behaviour was a living example of the sentiment of love which disregarded superficial differences and touched the deepest heart-strings of the other person. For him there was no dichotomy between principle and practice. There are leaders who preach principles but behave as if their personal life has nothing to do with them. Shri Guruji however lived the principles that he preached and became totally identified with them. Indeed he became the living emblem of those principles.

One Vast Family

Once, when a couple called on Shri Guruji, he inquired after their son's health and asked, 'Was he not operated upon in Germany?' A person sitting nearby was astounded and asked him how he could remember such small details. In answer Shri Guruji could have talked about his amazing memory, but the answer he gave was still more amazing. With transparent simplicity he said "How can I forget such an event in my family however old it might be?" Those two simple words, 'my family', were the quintessence of Shri Guruji's philosophy of love that conquered everybody and everything.

Whenever he stayed with a family where somebody was ill he never failed to inquire about his medical treatment. Shri Guruji had a fairly good knowledge of Homoeopathy and sometimes suggested its medicines. His laugh was so spontaneous and loud that it would fill the whole atmosphere in the house with mirth and delight. In fact, his laughter was infectious and would lighten the stress and strain of life in persons around him. His sense of humor was remarkable and would transform the atmosphere in the house into one of pervasive joy. He was confident that if every Sanghachalak achieved such identification with the people and the families around him the work of the Sangh could not but grow.

Once Shri Guruji requested an eminent elderly person to accept the Sanghachalak's post in a certain place. The gentleman asked, "What would I be expected to do as a Sanghachalak?"

Shri Guruji asked him, "Suppose you have a joint family, with children and grandchildren. What would be your responsibility as the head of the family?"

"Of course, I would take care of them," the old man replied.

"Would you let them quarrel among themselves?"

"Certainly not."

"Would you see that the children receive a good education or not?"

"Certainly, I would ensure that they have a bright future."

"You would also wish the children in your family to cultivate good qualities, is it not?"

"Naturally. It is my primary duty."

"Well, you will have to look upon the Sangh also as your vast family, and do all those things that you would do for your family" said Shri Guruji :

This conversation puts, in a nutshell, Shri Guruji's concept of the various responsibilities of the Chief of a Sangh Shakha. Being an-*adhikari*-an office-bearer - in the Sangh meant discharging a responsibility like that of looking after a big family and keeping it happy, united and progressive. And no such considerations as of physical hardship or time should come in its way. Garnering people on the strength of love, inculcating good cultural values in them, and using oneself up like a slowly burning stick of incense - that was in short Shri Guruji's concept of a Sangh worker. And he himself was a living embodiment of that concept.

The Karyakarta is one who shares the pleasures and sorrows of others. He does not indulge in wordy duels with them and knows how to win their hearts with his dexterous behaviour. Shri Guruji, with his own personal example had shown the way of how a Karyakarta should be deeply concerned about the welfare of Swayamsevaks, attending to their personal problems, etc. Concepts such as devotion and service to the society were made living by Shri Guruji's own example.

Any sense of having done a good turn to any one never once crossed his mind. God in the form of the poor and the sorrow-stricken provides us with an opportunity to serve Him which should only make us indebted to Him; this lesson taught by Shri Ramakrishna was practised by Shri Guruji to its hilt. It seems destiny had willed that Shri Guruji through his own living example coupled with an organised endeavour should awaken the spirit of *Dharma* in society. Further, he was to

assimilate the essence of modern science and build Bharat on the firm foundation of spirituality. In a way, he was as if Vivekananda reborn, radiantly reflecting every aspect of the latter's multisplendoured personality. The only difference was that Shri Guruji never wore Bhagwa clothes nor did he assume a different name signifying *sanyāsa*. because, the Sangh was not an organisation of sanyasis. Instead, it attempted to organise and unify the entire society based on the Hindu ethos, and so it's scope is not exclusive, but all pervading.

Tremendous Vitality

Shri Guruji had tremendous mental power which enabled him to meet every kind of challenge with indomitable courage and resoluteness. His faith in his mission born out of his experience was unsurpassed; nor did he, believe in blaming adverse circumstances for one's own failure. he considered it a sin to blame God for one's own dereliction of duty. If anybody said the people were bad, the society at large was bad, he would say, "If you think that way you are no use to this society. So first look within yourself."

He once wrote in a letter, "We see bad things and also good things in the society when we meet many people. But when you despise the bad things you must remember that you are a part of the same society. If you forget this reality how can you identify yourself with the society? At the same time, how fair is it to blame God for the social deficiencies that you see around you? So we must give up this tendency of passing the blame and work with the spirit of service to society as service to God Himself."

As Shri Guruji took a spiritual view of life he saw the same vital element present in the entire universe. For him nothing was lowly, everything was a part of life - his own life. Once, while on a tour of Punjab, he came out of his room for going somewhere. A group of Swayamsevaks stood ready to accompany him. Shri Guruji's chappals were kept outside the door. Before putting them on he folded his hands towards them. The Swayamsevaks were amazed at the gesture. Shri Guruji said, 'Don't these chappals protect my feet? They wear themselves away but protect me. So I am grateful to them and bow to them' In short, for Shri Guruji everything in life, however trifling was a manifestation of the Divine, every event a result of His will. If what had happened was not to his liking he never faltered in his faith to feel that the happening was for his ultimate good.

Self-criticism

Once it so happened that Shri Guruji had accepted the responsibility of doing something for an organisation at Chennai within a certain period. He gave the necessary instructions for this to the local Sangh workers and proceeded on his tour. Unfortunately, the work could not be completed in time and the organisation wrote to Shri Guruji to that effect. Shri Guruji was known as a person who kept his word, come what may. His tours, meetings, public programmes everything always went like clockwork. No one ever doubted if he would reach a certain place by a certain hour. At times Shri Guruji had to keep a hectic pace to keep to the schedule. At times he even walked for miles in very difficult conditions to reach in time. Naturally he was sad to receive the news that his promise to that organisation had not been fulfilled. He made inquiries and came to know that the local Sangh workers had been lax. But the letter of apology that he wrote to the organisation had no word of blame for the workers with a view to save himself. Rather he blamed himself, but added, "There must be some divine purpose behind my failure. God might have felt that there was a possibility of my becoming vain as a man of his word. So he might have given me this failure to remove any such possibility." How many leaders would there be who would so humbly accept the blame for their followers' failures? Shri Guruji was not only free of ego but always cautioned workers - especially *pracharaks* - not to fall prey to it. Not only in his meetings and talks, his letters to workers also carried this all too important point.

Unbroken Tradition of Sangh Leadership

It is true that Shri Guruji did not use the platform of the Sangh to preach spirituality, individual penance or religious ritualism. But he looked upon the work of the Sangh as a complete and great spiritual *sadhana* that led individual human life to ultimate sublimation. He believed that he who did Sangh work in a spirit of total dedication and self-surrender needs no other *sadhana*. Once he actually exclaimed, 'The Shakha is my God'. Thus, for him Sangh work and pursuit of spirituality were one and the same.

After the demise of the third Sarsanghachalak, Shri Balasaheb Deoras, some so-called intellectuals expressed the view that there was a difference in the approaches of the three Sarsanghachalaks Dr.

Hedgewar, Shri Guruji and Shri Deoras. They held that while Dr. Hedgewar's stress was upon political awakening, Shri Guruji tried to give thoughts of Sangh a spiritual tone and Shri Deoras advocated social unity and harmony purely from a temporal point of view. Actually speaking, this is far from true. Right from the beginning Sangh work has had all the three dimensions, political, spiritual and social and the Sangh has pursued all of them all these decades of its existence.

Shri Guruji too never neglected any of these aspects. His speeches in public before as well as after 1947 always contained comments on the political policies of national leaders. He was always critical in his views on such political matters such as Muslim appeasement, the Kashmir problem, attempts at Christianising the North-East, Government leaders' fissiparous policies, neglect of refugees, war-time policies, truces and treaties, lack of patriotism and character, absence of value-based politics and so on. He very clearly propounded the Hindu thought that nurtured national unity and integrity. His press conferences from time to time as well as his discussions with workers and leaders outside the Sangh throw ample light on his frank and fearless views *vis-a-vis* a number of political and economic questions. He often commented on international politics also.

In particular, Shri Guruji's political awareness came into sharp focus when Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji decided to launch the Bharatiya Jana Sangh as a political party in tune with the philosophy of the Sangh. At that time, he gave Dr. Mukherji two able and talented Sangh workers assist to him in the party work. He asserted that, as in other fields, in the political field also the Sangh philosophy should become decisive. At the same time he was firmly of the view that national reconstruction is not possible through the medium of politics alone. He affirmed that if the Hindu nation had to regain status of teacher of the entire world on the basis of its pristine cultural ideals it had to manifest the same in its practical life. The *samskaras* imparted in the Sangh Shakha should influence the entire life of the society, and it is on this touchstone that all policies and programmes of the political party should be tested.

Shri Guruji did not neglect the social and service aspects either. Rather, he inspired a number of socially-oriented activities. Many of the ongoing service projects today were in fact originally started with

the inspiration and guidance provided by him. These include well-known organisations such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram.

As for *Adhyātma, Dharma* and *Samskriti,* these have been the integral parts of Sangh work from the day one. Both the pledge and the prayer of the Sangh reflect these features quite clearly. The prayer emphasises that the fiery *sadhana* of Sangh is one that leads to both-the glory of the nation as well as the highest spiritual illumination of the individual. The phraseology used in the Sangh's pre-1947 pledge stressed not only the goal of achieving national independence but also the preservation and promotion of the nation's Dharma and Sanskriti. The aspect of independence was later replaced by a commitment to the all-round rejuvenation of the Hindu Nation.

In both these concepts of '*Samutkarsha nishreyas*' and '*sarvangeena vikas*' the underlying intention was that while the Sangh did aspire for the nation's independence, its goal also comprehended the all-round progress of the nation. It was to attain the pinnacle of glory, with the *Dharma* and the Sanskriti duly protected. Such a goal can be realised only on the strength of an organised, virile, harmonious ahd industrious society. For this purpose, a highly motivated nationalist fervour has to be aroused.

So, to say that a certain Sarsanghachalak promoted only certain ideas and relegated others to the background is basically wrong. Sangh has always stood for the strengthening of all the three aspects of the life of the nation-political, social and cultural and it has not deviated from this comprehensive commitment to date.

A Life of Ceaseless Action

In Shri Guruji's life action never ceased. His reservoir of energy seemed endless. One often wonders, how he could go on in that fashion? Once Shri Guruji himself provided an explanation. He was in Kashi, where Dr. P. K. Banerji had extracted his teeth. After the extraction Dr. Banerji advised him complete rest for some days and instructed the accompanying workers to ensure that he got it. Accordingly they cancelled all his engagements from the next day onwards. They thought they had made foolproof arrangements for his complete rest. But the result was just the opposite. After the days rest, Shri Guruji got so

much cough that the whole night passed coughing. By next morning, the cough grew so much that everybody was worried. Nobody could think of what was to be done about it. Then Shri Guruji said, ``I am just carrying out your wishes." The Swayamsevaks attending on him could not understand what he meant. So he explained - ``You don't understand but this body came to an end long back. This physical frame has nothing left but disease in it. It is only Sangh work that has kept it going on. Sangh programmes are now my only life left. In fact, it is they that have kept my body functioning. Now, out of love for me, you have stopped them all. The result is that the body is going back to disease. So if you care for my health you should arrange for my daily routine to start again."

The stunned Swayamsevaks immediately removed all restraints imposed on him. The Swayamsevaks and other visitors began calling on him. Meetings, chats, laughter - everything began again. The cough too disappeared!

Like the `Adamant' and the `Flower'

A special characteristic of Shri Guruji's nature was that he brought back to our minds the men of God described by Saint Tukaram - soft as a flower, hard as the adamant. Once his mother Taiji said, 'When Madhu was in school he once read a poem in which the poet had described in moving words the tragic condition of a bird shot by an archer trying again and again to fly about but collapsing every time. He was so overcome that tears rolled down his cheeks. He was so soft-hearted." But when, in 1942, he called upon young men to leave their homes and come out as *pracharaks* he was harsh enough to say, "I have come to take away children from the laps of their mothers." When young boys responded to his call and went out to different parts of the country some mothers wept and begged Shri Guruji to return their children to them, but he never asked any *pracharak* to go back home. Needless to say he was equally hard on himself. He often left on tour leaving his old and ailing mother in bed.

He had left everything to the will of Almighty. Still when he came across the misery-stricken plight of others, his innermost feelings would stir up and in the process his heart would melt.

The Sangh's work of national reconstruction is an arduous task

that goes on and on, and has no day to day publicity value as such. It calls for turning one's back to the lure of quick results and cheap popularity. So Shri Guruji kept the Sangh away from power politics on the one hand and populist agitations on the other. During his life time the Sangh had launched just two agitations, - one was the Satyagraha during the ban period, and the other the anti-cow-slaughter campaign in 1952. At other times the *Swayamsevaks* did what they were expected to do as patriotic citizens. And while doing all this, they neither thought of bolstering the organisational image nor expected any reward for themselves.

Emphasis on Regular Daily Samskaras

This aloofness was not a fad nor did it have any ulterior motive behind it. The idea behind it was basic and sound; that temporary enthusiasm did not go to make a successful organisation, rather when temporary enthusiasm subsides greater slackness results. Hence a nation-builder needs to be farsighted enough to ensure that occasional programmes do not come in the way of the regular samskar-imparting daily activities. Doctorji had taken abundant precaution in this respect and Shri Guruji too followed in his footsteps. Shri Guruji always cautioned Swayamsevaks against talking big being carried away by over-enthusiasm. Rather he stressed the importance of building up one's own capacity in gradual stages. He used to say, `first of all let us learn to do small and ordinary things properly'. With the *Shareerika Shikshaks* (the workers in charge of physical training) Shri Guruji, used to say that if every Swayamsevak learns to do '*Daksha*' '*Arama*' and 'Swasta' correctly and even if it takes one year for him to learn them properly, that itself can be considered as a big gain in itself. And he was particular about many small things - like not leaving food in the plate, wearing clean Indian clothes, not missing *Prărthana* even for a day, finishing a speech in the allotted time, touching the feet of the elderly and of saints, and replying to letters without delay. He said the seed of any great success lay in doing such small things well and devotedly.

Big responsibilities do not come every other day, but cultivating the daily habit of doing small things well is a necessary preparation for discharging the big responsibilities successfully when the time comes. This is why Shri Guruji insisted on the right code of daily conduct. It goes without saying that he was himself the living embodiment of such a code.

Samartha Ramdas, the Guru of Chatrapathi Shivaji in one of his advices, has said : The society respects and get inspired about only such an individual, who actually practices what he preaches. In other worlds, there ought not to be any hiatus between the precept and the practice of an individual if he sincerely wants to be accepted by the society as it's leader.

Friend of All

Shri Guruji was quick to spot out and appreciate the good points in others. His comments on the qualities of great men were so perceptive that even the followers of those leaders would not have thought of them. For instance Shri Guruji had met Gandhiji a number of times, and Gandhiji had even addressed Swayamsevaks during the terrible days of the partition. He had also made a laudatory reference to Shri Guruji. That later on Shri Guruji was charged with complicity in Gandhiji's assassination and arrested and the Sangh was banned on false grounds is another story. Dr. Hedgewar too had no animus for Gandhiji. Certainly both Doctorji and Shri Guruji sharply differed with him on matters like the Khilafat movement and Muslim appeasement, but they had nothing but praise for Gandhiji's exceptional qualities.

Tribute to Gandhiji

Shri Guruji paid rich tributes to Gandhiji in 1969, during the latter's birth centenary year. In an article in 'Yugavani', a Marathi magazine published in Nagpur, he wrote : 'Nobody can deny the pre-eminent position of Gandhiji among those great men who made a decisive impact in the political field during the past fifty years. His extraordinary greatness is reflected in the religious, social, economic and other aspects of his life. Nobody else had such a hold on the people's mind.'

In the same article Shri Guruji added:

'Gandhiji was a devout Hindu. He tried to make the Government enact effective laws to ban slaughter of the cow, a point of honour for the Hindus. He also made many-sided efforts - economic, social, educational and so on - for the uplift of our neglected, so-called untouchable brethren so that they could acquire status of respect in the society. He strongly criticised the conversion activities by Christian missionaries of uneducated, simple-minded and economically

underprivileged vanavasi and other deprived sections of our countrymen. He expressed himself strongly against the materialistic ideologies and systems like Socialism and Communism, which advocated violence and lawlessness and led the society away from a life of culture and restraint. Because of all these qualities the people will always have - and should have - great love and reverence for Gandhiji.'

In a similar tribute in a booklet published by 'Rashtrotthan Sahitya' of Bangalore on Nov. 8, 1969 Shri Guruji wrote:

``The child came into this world like any other human being but grew to towering heights of greatness by his sheer efforts and the quality of his overwhelming love for one and all; and verily became a Mahatma..... Gandhiji never tired of emphasising - character and moral values..... Self restraint, Gandhiji used to affirm, should be the guiding principle in our daily life..... Gandhiji lives in the hearts of man-as eternal image of affection and adoration - chiefly because of his unflinching adherence to the spiritual and moral values, his endless efforts to live up to them in his own life.... His life demands of us a deep appreciation of the eternal values of life manifest in his conduct and a determined life manifest in his conduct and a determined effort to make them a living inspiration for generations to come. It is an inspiration for selfless and dedicated service to society, for a life of virtues, sweetness and harmony which would make one worthy of adoration by the entire humanity."

Similarly in a public meeting organised by the Sangli District (Maharashtra) Mahatma Gandhi Birth Centenary Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Dhondi Ramanna Patil, a leading Congress leader, Shri Guruji garlanded Gandhiji's portrait and said, ``We have an old tradition of *Pratah-smaran,* in which we recall the memories of great men and women and holy shrines of our country every morning. For many centuries the practice of adding new names to it had come to a halt. The Sangh took up the challenge of restarting it and added names of all great men to date, and prepared a *Bhakti Stotra.* (presently, updated and called *Ekatmata-Stotra*). Among these memorable individuals Gandhiji's name has been included with all respect."

Along with Gandhiji, Shri Guruji also praised many contemporary leaders on appropriate occasions. Swatantrya Veer Savarkar, Dr. Shyama

Prasad Mukherji, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Pt. Satawalekar, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Shri Hanuman Prasad Poddar and Shri Rajgopalachari. The tributes he paid to these and other great sons of the nation through his speeches, articles and letters were as eloquent of his feelings as they were perceptive. On the other hand he would not utter a word about himself. He had the exceptional organisational ability to keep Sangh workers and *pracharaks* spread all over the country together as a team, but he always gave the credit of success in work to them. In his eyes his greatest asset was that he was a Swayamsevak. In him such an amazing confluence of excellent qualities went with such a complete absence of ego.

Versatile Talent

Shri Guruji had a razor-sharp intellect and his knowledge of numerous subjects was astoundingly up to date. He had good knowledge of classical music and had made minute suggestions when the Band division of the Sangh adopted new compositions based on *Ragas*. His letters on various subjects were of the nature of scholarly essays reflecting his penetrating insight and gras over such spheres. His memory was phenomenal and he could quote from a treasure-house of treatises that he had assimilated. A spiritual *sadhaka* that he was, he naturally knew Yoga thoroughly, but at the same time he was at home in such diverse disciplines as astronomy, astrology, ecology, cybernatics, atomic science, Ayurveda, Homoeopathy and Allopathy. There were occasions when experts in these fields were impressed with the depth of Guruji's knowledge in these fields. Then he would say in jest - 'Look, I'm a lawyer. As you know, a lawyer can argue on any subject, whether he knows it or not, I do the same.'

The present Sarsanghachalak, Prof. Rajendra Singh, has an interesting story to tell regarding this amazing versatility of Shri Guruji. Once the professors of various science disciplines at the Allahabad University had been invited to a programme of Shri Guruji. The professors were seated at different tables faculty-wise and it was decided that Shri Guruji would sit at every table for some time and talk with the professors. At the end of it all the professors began to wonder about as to what subject Shri Guruji had chosen for his M.Sc. Professors of every faculty thought that he must have chosen their subject, as he appeared so highly knowledgeable in it. Finally when

they were told that his subject was Zoology, no wonder they were amazed beyond words.

In spite of knowing so much about so many sciences Shri Guruji held that science should be in tune with Dharma, the code of spiritual values, because while the laws of science kept changing with research and new discoveries, the spiritual principles of Dharma were eternal, unchanging. Science was an instrument for man's material happiness, but the essence of man's happiness lay in a life lived in consonance with Dharma. And Dharma, itself, had harmonised both the aspects of temporary happiness and spiritual bliss.

With this holistic view of the purpose of human life constantly before him Shri Guruji inspired, promoted, encouraged and aided various eminent individuals and the meritorious work they were doing in diverse fields. These included the famous speech series of the late Pt. Balshastri Hardas, a great scholar of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and many other ancient works, the lexicographical work of Shri Vishwanath Naravane of Pune, promotion of Samskriti by Dr. S. B. Varnekar, service to Hinduism by Shri Hanuman Prasad Poddar, architect of the famous Gita Press of Gorakhpur, the Geet Ramayana project of reputed singer Shri Sudhir Phadke, the literacy output of Shri G. N. Dandekar, and the cultural publications of Shri Amarendra Gadgil. He was also the inspiration behind the work of the Deendayal Research Institute as well as the birth centenary celebrations of Yogi Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda. There were many other foundations, organisations and natural calamity relief committees that took inspiration from him. Thus even while engaged in the Sangh work Shri Guruji developed a line of supportive activities by eminent, talented individuals.

Concentrating on Basic Work

The basic work of watering the roots of the great tree - our nation - has been taken up by the Sangh. So Shri Guruji did not approve of any institutional or agitational activity leading to its neglect. He certainly encouraged individuals engaged in constructive projects, but his attitude towards the tackling of multifarious problems facing the society becomes quite clear in a letter he once sent to a lover of Samskrit. In that letter he clearly wrote:

"In today's atmosphere all leaders chase the mirage of modernity and progress and take pride in discarding and destroying the enduring national points of reverence. In such a situation, the Government's perverse education policy is as expected from such leadership. If it has to be changed, we must think whether piecemeal agitations would bring about the desired result. The real need is to strike at the very root - at the anti-national tendency of depending on others, and to build up a disciplined force of patriots and nationalists and through it purify all the various streams of our national life. If you water the root the branches and leaves will automatically receive sustenance. Similarly, purifying the mindset of the people and making them an organised, effective force can alone be the only effective solution to all problems. Till such time individual efforts are also required. But our objective should always be the strengthening of the basic inspiration, the building of the basic foundation of national strength."

This indeed, in a nutshell, was the message of Shri Guruji's entire life. The bright signs of change generated by him are already clearly visible on the national horizon. The day is not far off when the desirable transformation will be seen in all its resplendent reality. When it happens, when a new era of great endeavours and achievements opens, a grateful people will acknowledge Shri Guruji, this modern seer, as the pioneer of that Era.

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23 CHRONOLOGY OF SHRI GURUJI'S LIFE

1906	Feb. 19 (Monday, Magha Vadya 11, Shaka 1827) : Birth in Nagpur at 4.34 a.m.
1915	Passed fourth standard examination. Stood first in Narmada Division (Pre-independence Madhya Pradesh). Awarded Scholarship.
1924	Passed Intermediate examination. Won prize for standing first in English. Entered Banaras Hindu University.
1926	Passed B.Sc.
1928	Passed M.Sc.
1929	Research at Madras aquarium.
1931	Entered Sangh.
1930-33	Lecturer at Banaras Hindu University.
1933	Law student in Nagpur.
1934	Appointed *Karyawaha* (Secretary) at Tulsibagh Shakha of Sangh.
	Stay in Mumbai for some time for Sangh work.
	Appointed *Sarvadhikari* (Chief Executive Officer) of Akola (Vidarbha) Sangh training camp.
1935	Passed L.L.B.
1936	Left for Sargachhi (Bengal) before Diwali.
	Stay with Shri Akhandananda, President of Ramakrishna Sangh.
1937	Jan. 13 : Accepted *Deeksha* (Initiation) on Makar Sankranti day.
	Feb 7 : Swami Akhandananda passes away.
	March end : Return to Nagpur.
1938	*Sarvadhikari* of Sangh training camp in Nagpur.
1939	Feb. end : Attended prominent workers meeting at Sindi (Wardha district, Vidarbha).
	March 22 : Left for Calcutta for Sangh work.
	Varsha Pratipada : Shakha starts.
	Sarvadhikari of Sangh training camp in Nagpur.

Aug. 13 : Appointed *Sarkaryawaha* (General Secretary) on Raksha Bandhan Day.

1940 Jan. 21 : Dr. Hedgewar passes away.

July 3 : Appointed as Sarsanghachalak.

July 21 : All Bharat convention on monthly *shraddha* day of Doctorji.

Aug. 4 : Government ban on Sangh's activities like route-march, uniform etc.

1942-47 Big expansion of Sangh work.

1946 Huge public programmes in Rawalpindi, Jhelum (Punjab) and Peshawar (NWFP).

1947 March : Extensive tour of Punjab.

'Punjab Relief Committee' established; 3000 relief camps set up.

Aug. 5-8 : Big programmes in Hyderabad and Karachi (Sindh).

Aug. 15 : Bharat Achieves Truncated Independence.

Sept. 12 : Meetings with Home Minister Sardar Patel and Mahatma Gandhi.

Oct 17-19 : Meeting with Maharaja Hari Singh in Srinagar, Kashmir.

Meeting with Prime Minister Nehru.

1948 Feb. 1 : Arrest in Nagpur

Feb. 2 : Ban on Sangh

Feb. 5 : Sangh dissolved. Thousands of Sangh workers arrested.

Aug. 6 : Release from prison.

Oct. 17: Leaves for Delhi.

Nov. 12 : Issues clarion call to re-start Sangh at the instance of *Sarkaryawaha,* Shri Bhaiyaji Dani

Arrest again in Delhi.

Nov. 14 : Brought from Delhi to Nagpur jail. Later shifted to Seoni jail.

Dec. 9 : Sangh starts again under the leadership of Bhaiyaji Dani. Country-wide *Satyagraha.*

1949 Jan. 21 : *Satyagraha* suspended. Mediation by Shri G. V. Ketkar and Shri T. R. V. Shastri.

July 12 : Ban removed.

July 13 : Unconditional release from Betul Jail.
Arrival in Nagpur.

July 19 : Left for Madras to see Shri T. R. V. Shastri.

All Bharat tour resumed. Meeting with Sardar Patel in Mumbai.

Aug. 21 : Unprecedented reception in Delhi.

1950 Feb. 8 : '*Vastuhara Samiti*' set up in Calcutta.

Aug. 11 : Relief work for Assam earthquake sufferers begins.

1951 '*Akal-grasta Sahayata Samiti*' set up in Bihar.

1952 Anti-cow slaughter movement.

Dec. 7 : Memorandum signed by nearly 2 crore citizens submitted to President Rajendra Prasad.

1954 March-April : Prolonged meeting of nearly 250 prominent *pracharaks* at Sindi (Wardha district).

July 21 : Demise of father.

1956 Fifty-first Birthday of Shri Guruji celebrated all over the country.

1960 March : All Bharat workers' meeting at Indore.

1962 April 6 : Inauguration of '*Smriti Mandir*', Dr. Hedgewar's Memorial at Reshimbagh, Nagpur, on *Varsha Pratipada Day.* Impressive all-Bharat assembly of Swayamsevaks.

1962 Aug. 12 : Demise of mother.
Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary Celebrations.
Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee set up.

1964 *Krishna Janmashtami :* Vishwa Hindu Parishad established at Sandipani Ashrama, Mumbai.

1965 Sept. 6 : Indo-Pak war. Attended meeting of national leaders convened by Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

1966 Jan. 22, 23, 24 : World Convention of Vishwa Hindu Parishad in Prayag.

1967 September : *Atma-Shraddha* at Brahma Kapal.

1970 July 1 : Cancer operation in Mumbai.

July 22 : Discharge from Hospital.

1972 Oct. 29 to Nov. 2 : Meeting of nearly 450 important workers from all over the country at Thane.

Dec. 19 : Dr. Moonje's portrait unveiled by Gen. Cariappa in Nagpur.

1972 Aug. 20 : Inauguration of Deendayal Research Institute in Delhi.

1973 Feb. 4 : Last public programme in Bangalore.

Mar. 14 : End of tour and return to Nagpur.

March 24-25 : Meeting of Akhila Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha in Nagpur. Last address - 'Victory is certain'.

April 2 : Wrote three letters about future arrangements and sealed them.

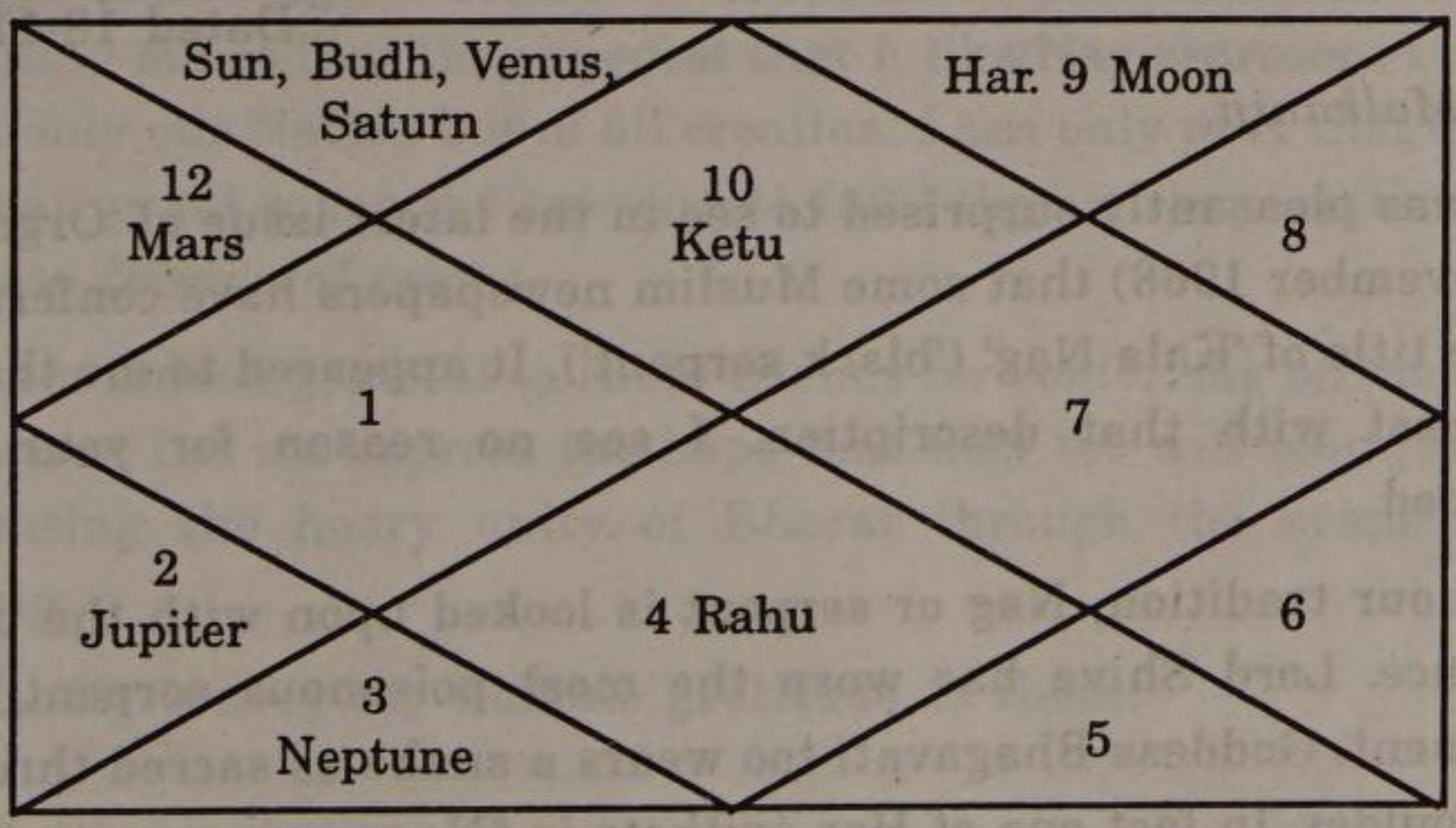
May 19 to 31 : Group-wise meetings with Swayamsevaks attending the Third Year Training Camp at Nagpur.

June 5 : Shuffled off his mortal coil at 9.05 p.m.

June 6 : Last rites at Reshimbagh, Nagpur in the evening.

SHRI GURUJI'S HOROSCOPE

Birth : February 19, 1906, 4.34 a.m. Nagpur Dashami joint with Ekadashi, Magh Vadya 11, Shaka 1827.



APPENDIX - I

Parama Poojaneeya Shri Guruji's total dedication to the cause of the Sangh and, in consequence, his exemplary identification with the society and with every single individual who came in contact with him are reminiscent of the Upanishadic dictum that if one learns to see the manifestation of God in all creation, one will have no cause for enmity or ill-will towards anyone. This profound realisation came to the fore in Shri Guruji's response to everyday situations. One such incident has been recalled by Shri K.R.Malkani, distinguished Editor of 'Organiser' for over three-and-a-half decades. Some Muslim newspapers had showered abuses on Shri Guruji, to the extent of referring to him as 'Kala Nag' ('black serpent'). Shri Malkani had written a fitting reply. After reading Shri Malkani's rejoinder in 'Organiser', Shri Guruji responded philosophically, mentioning the hoary tradition of serpent worship and its mythological background, expressing feelings of friendliness towards the Muslim detractors, and observing that there is much to learn even in customs like serpent worship as they reveal unity in diversity as a cherished value. Shri Guruji's letter is reproduced below.

Dated 18-11-1968

Priya Malkaniji,

I was pleasantly surprised to see in the latest issue of 'Organiser' (16 November 1968) that some Muslim newspapers have conferred on me the title of 'Kala Nag' ('black serpent'). It appeared to me that you are upset with that description. I see no reason for your being disturbed.

In our tradition, Nag or serpent is looked upon with the utmost reverence. Lord Shiva has worn the most poisonous serpent as an adornment. Goddess Bhagavati too wears a snake as sacred thread on her shoulder. In fact one of Her epithets is "Naga-yajnopavitini". And Lord Ganesha, the bestower of all knowledge and discrimination, can never do without the company of the serpent. It is well known that Bhagavan Vishnu, protector of all the worlds, always rests in the lap of Adisesha. Kundalini, the vast Yogic power dormant in each

individual, has always been compared to a serpent. Through the practice of yama-niyama (self-control), the Kundalini- power is awakened and gradually ascends through the spinal column activating each chakra on the way drawing out the sublime Yogashakti and supernal knowledge and culminating at the lotus-like Sahasrara when it becomes one with Parabrahman. One who attains this state enjoys supreme Bliss, releases oneself from the cycle of birth and death and attains to Moksha which is the ultimate goal of human life.

The Hindus' reverence for Nag is thus not without basis. Even the forest-dwellers, not to speak of the rest of society, worship the serpent God, especially on the Nagapanchami day. In South India the sacred Nag is worshipped as Lord Subramanya for strength, prosperity and innate joy.

The Nag truly represents the unity of all creation. The tail-end tries to reach up to the hood, signifying that whatever has been created by Parabrahman eventually dissolves in that source.

The fact that Nag-worship is practised by all Hiṇdus indicates the fundamental unity of our Nation.

The Muslim newspapers, by likening me to a serpent, have - perhaps unwittingly - bestowed on me an honour I may not deserve. By calling me as Nag they suggest that I, like Nag represent the unity of not only our Nation but of all creation. I can only pray that Goddess Bagavati grant to me the strength to fulfil the high expectation voiced by these friends of mine.

I am indeed grateful to these friends for conferring on me so high an honour. Let me express the hope that they too will soon join us in celebrating the hoary unity of Bharat through the symbolic Nag worship.

Kindly convey my humble gratitude to them.

(Sd.) **M. S. GOLWALKAR**

APPENDIX - 2

Shri Guruji always left an indelible impression on the minds of people who came in contact with him. To illustrate this unique trait of Shri Guruji we reproduce below an article which appeared in `Organiser' weekly after Shri Guruji's demise. The article was written by Dr. Praful Desai, the esteemed surgeon who treated Shri Guruji.

Shri Guruji was my patient.

Almost exactly three years ago, to the date, on a windy rainy night, a professional colleague called me up to know whether I will be able to see Guruji Golwalkar for a medical problem that afficted him.

Next morning I was driving down to see him. Thoughts raced through my mind as fast as the car. We had always heard and read about Golwalkar. We knew the man had courage of his convictions and that he had fixed and rigid thoughts - (How wrong I was on this last point) on many a matter relating to Hinduism and a Hindu state. For these reasons I was very keen on meeting him. I thought I would be up against a difficult individual in trying to convince him about matters medical.

His fragile and gentle frame seemed to me almost contrary to what I had known, heard, and thought about the man. My initial meeting convinced me that I was dealing with a highly penetrating and inquisitive mind; that he had flexibility and was open to reason and able to listen to other's viewpoints. I had a good guage of the man during our initial conversation.

Classic Hindi

"Well Doctor, what do you think of my condition?" he asked in chaste Hindi. Not being an ardent conversationalist of classic Hindi as Guruji, I replied in a matter of fact way with adequate professional accuracy. "Well I think we are dealing with a situation which is highly suspicious of cancer and that an operation to prove it and eradicate it will be necessary." My diagnosis did not unnerve him in the least - as often happens to lesser mortals - but after a reflective moment Guruji replied "Well, if it is cancer, I think in my opinion it is best

left alone - and Doctor, can you ever hope to cure it?" He obviously knew a lot about the disease and its effects on the human body.

"Has it spread anywhere else?" was the next question. I had to answer quickly - with sound reasoning to appeal to the brilliant mind that I was dealing with - I replied before he finished, that it is a matter of opinion - a lay opinion at that - and I cannot agree with him that it should be left alone. The question of cure depends on the extent of disease which can only be assessed at operation on which also depended the follow up treatment. Leaving it alone was like letting a ship drift in an ocean of icebergs. Treating you is to take control of the situation and at least steer clear of obvious dangers. It has not spread anywhere else but the extent of the local disease can only be assessed by an operation.

Guruji sized up the situation and went into what seemed a very long silence and introspection. "Well, then I have to go through this" he replied calmly, but the next moment he was thinking aloud his numerous appointments, about his work, about his tours that he had planned. The decision was taken on the spot. Precise and clear orders went to his secretary and associates. Guruji entered the hospital on June 30th, 1970 - and successfully underwent surgery on July 1, 1970.

Brilliant Qualities

The initial episode clearly reflected many of his brilliant qualities. The knowledge and his willingness to submit to the dictates of science. A few but searching questions about his clinical condition suggesting an incisive mind, an ability to face on adverse situation with great courage, calmness and foresight and his intensive devotion and commitment to the task that he had at hand. I thought one of the argument that impressed him most was when I said, "You must undergo this so that you can resume your normal activities without much delay". No further arguments ever took place.

His response to major surgery was marvelous for a man of 65. The next day he was up and about. Three weeks of his stay in the hospital provided me with ample opportunities to study the man and his mind. Some of the conversation that we had has been a source of great education for mortals like me. I reproduce in short few instances which vividly brought out his inner character.

He wanted to know the whole truth about the extent of his disease

more than enough on my bay". He did seek medical permission to attend. It was not even seven days since his surgery. "I will let you go provided you do not abscond" - I said. His ready wit immediately retorted "Do I look like a bandit?" The atmosphere was full of humour and mirth during his hospitalisation.

Political Philosopher

It is difficult to find a good adjective to describe the man in his totality. He was a political philosopher, a voracious reader, with an encyclopedic knowledge of men, matters and events and in him there was an even fusion of Science, Religion and Culture. "All human progress must ultimately depend on the progress of Science" - he once told me. I was surprised to hear this, coming as it did from a man of such deep religious convictions. He was not one of those who inflicted his philosophy and ideas on others; yet he was firm in his convictions in whatever he said and discussed. "I have and always shall stand up for what I think is right". This sentence sums up his inner strength and courage and also why he has such a large following.

Guruji continued his activity all throughout is short sojourn in the hospital. Follow-up treatment was tolerated well. On the eve of his departure after the completion of his treatment he remarked : "It is not for mortals to worry about death. All living things must cease to live. It is not the quantum but the quality of life that one spends which counts. I have a mission and I pray to God to keep me active to the last." I thought he was a man in a hurry to fulfil his mission.

The subsequent two years saw him very active and very healthy. He had gone on beyond my expectation. I always dreaded the inevitable disease when he first operated.

He was a very co-operative and exemplarily patient. He attended for follow-up checks and evaluation whenever he came to Bombay. On one of his regular visits I asked him, "How is the young man getting along? "Getting youngest" was the reply.

Getting younger

Time catches up with all and so it did with Guruji. He began to feel unwell from about February or March this year and though he kept active in his work, he showed the ominous signs and subsequent event are too recent to justify any further dilation.

It is not the purpose of this write-up to idealize or to enlarge Guruji

more in death beyond what he was in life. A man who faced physical and mental stress of a cruel sickness with courage and equanimity, a man who had very strong convictions about his country and always stood up for it, a man though fragile and slim of frame had tremendous energy, drive and discipline, a man who saw wrong and tried to right it.

It is sad that he is no more, but I am proud to have known him, though for a short time, and am happy that he lived and strode this beloved land.

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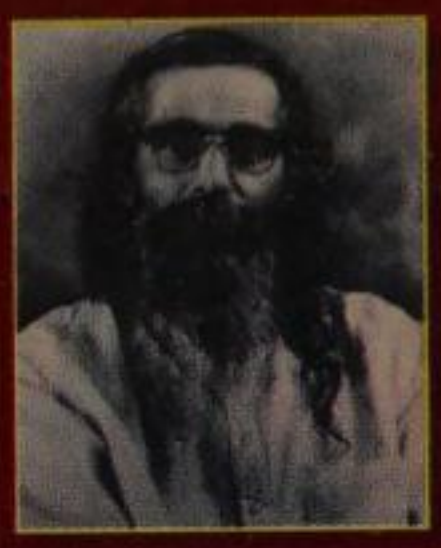

SHRI GURUJI

Shri M.S. Golwalkar was a leader with a 'broad national outlook' who always thought on all India basis.

Shri Golwalkar had faith in spiritualism and had great regard for other religious faiths. He did not have a narrow view of any religion. In fact, he had love for the Muslims and only wanted them to join the national mainstream.

- Acharya Vinoba Bhave

He held a respected position in national life by the force of his personality and the intensity of his conviction, even though many of us could not agree with him.

- Smt. Indira Gandhi

He was able to create a large following and enforce strict discipline among his followers. Anyone who succeeds in introducing discipline among a large body of people does a national service.

- Shri Jagjivan Ram

Shri Guruji was the Swamy Vivekananda of the modern era, steadfastly dedicated to the building of a great and glorious Bharat.

- Shri L.K. Advani

Sri Guruji personified the ideal of simplicity and dedication to duty. He ardently believed in the reforms of Hindu culture and traditions and worked for it zealously.

- Shri Zail Singh

Though it would appear paradoxical, yet the fact remains that he was respected among thinking Muslims - not because of his philosophy but because of his courage of conviction, pure honesty, free from hypocrisy.

- "Radiance" a Muslim weekly

The prsence of Shri Golwalkar - a great man of culture - was most essential during the hard times through which the country was passing.

- Jain Muni Sushil Kumar

SAHITYA SINDHU PRAKASHANA, BANGALORE

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